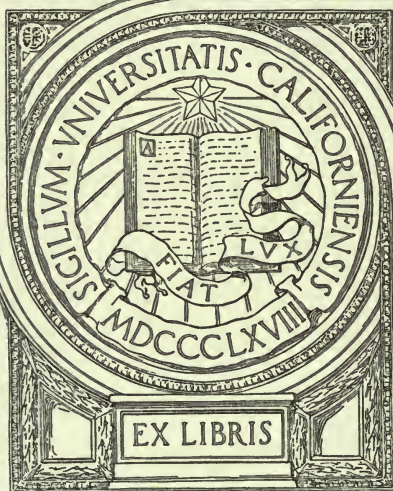




GIFT OF
PROFESSOR C.A. KOFOID



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CAMP AND STUDIO.



CAMP AND STUDIO.



BY

IRVING MONTAGU,

*Late War Artist of "The Illustrated London News," &c. &c.
Author of "Wanderings of a War Artist."*



LONDON :
W. H. ALLEN AND CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE.
AND AT CALCUTTA.

1890.

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JOINTS AND JMAS

TO THE
ASSOCIATION

GIFT OF
PROFESSOR C.A. KOFOLD

RMG

DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

TO

James Zohrab, Esquire,

HER MAJESTY'S CONSUL-GENERAL, PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAYTI,

EQUALLY A THOROUGH FRIEND

IN

"CAMP AND STUDIO."

M216965

P R E F A C E .

IN introducing *Camp and Studio* to the reader, I do so with mixed feelings of confidence and anxiety—confidence begotten of the complimentary way in which the press and public accepted a recent work of mine, *Wanderings of a War Artist*—and anxiety to know if in this latter effort I shall continue to hold the good opinion they have formed. I have at least endeavoured, while sustaining my own individuality, to profit by those just, generous, and in some cases exhaustive, criticisms which I have received.

These rambling reminiscences pretend to nothing more than they are. Those who would have military detail or political point will find it elsewhere.

Camp and Studio may be read as a distinct work, or in the light of a sequel to *Wanderings of a War Artist*, the early experiences introduced into that book being balanced by the later ones to be found in the present volume.

Having trodden the war-path together, I would ask those who are sufficiently in accord with me to join me in Bohemia, that I may afford them a glimpse behind the shifting scenes of artistic life, thus conveying to them some idea of my doings at home as well as abroad.

May I also be permitted to say to those who are inclined to suppose any of these experiences extravagant, that not only must the circumstances be taken into consideration but, since fact is often so much "stranger than fiction," that it has never been necessary to go beyond its limits.

As I would be most careful not to offend the susceptibilities of any, I have, in touching on studio life, advisedly altered the names of some of those to whom I have referred.

I have also endeavoured throughout to avoid too frequent reference to those amongst the good, great, wise, or witty with whom my life has been associated, save where the interweaving of their experiences have been necessary to a description of my own, for while feeling strongly how much at all times we are indebted to others, I prefer standing on my own small merits to borrowing plumes which should be worn by them alone. Thus hopefully committing *Camp and Studio* to the criticisms of the press and the public, do I lay down for the moment my pen and pencil and await their verdict.

CAMBRIDGE STUDIOS,

42, LINDEN GARDENS, W.

March 1890.



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INTRODUCTION.

Yes, it was envy—that envy which is akin to admiration. He, a bronzed Indian officer who had come to me for a few artistic hints prior to his departure for Afghanistan; I, a war artist, fretting under the necessity of having to weave fancies on studio canvases rather than experience facts at the front.

“A few broad effects, put in this way with a palette knife,” I suggested, and then—

“Telegram, Sir.”

It was my shock-headed studio boy, who, suddenly putting his terra cotta-coloured cranium round a bit of Moorish drapery, presented the “red envelope,” and as suddenly disappeared again.

With apologies to my pupil, who was now plying his palette knife with a will, I hastily opened it. It was from the office of the *Illustrated London News*, with reference to my starting at once for the East. Political scene-shifters having raised the “act drop,” had revealed in a blaze of light an unexpected transformation scene; it was thus, indeed, it appealed to me, and the amiable envy with which I had a moment before eyed Colonel (now General) Sankey (who was still indefatigably laying on those broad effects)

had fled. I too was about to play my part, small as it, of course, would comparatively be, in connection with events of the moment.

An hour later I was closeted with Mr. Mason Jackson, the urbane and well-known art editor of the *Illustrated News*, arranging preliminaries. I was to start the following day, so as to be ready for certain anticipated developments.

Oh, the hurry and the skurry of it all. The compressing of one's innumerable etceteras into the narrowest limits, in the shortest possible space of time; everything, from top-boots and revolvers to Turkish introductions, and tooth-brushes, had in rapid succession to receive consideration.

"Telegram, Sir," again shouted the fiery-headed one. Mr. Ingram, the member, and proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*, wished to see me in the tea-room of the House of Commons, where a hansom shortly afterwards put me down, and where certain arrangements connected with my immediate destination were made.

On returning, that irrepressible studio boy was at it again.

"Telegram, Sir."

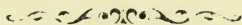
He actually seemed to take a sort of fiendish delight in it; and the cab was detained to carry me forthwith down to the Strand, where a certain rearrangement of affairs took place, a terrible colliery accident in South Wales postponing my departure from England for twenty-four hours, so that I might *ad interim* supply pictures of that catastrophe.

That night I was sitting at the pit's mouth through the

long weary hours that were occupied by the search parties, who from time to time came up in "the criddle" from the depths below with the bodies of their comrades. My artistic notes made, I hastened off by an early morning train, making the carriage I was in my studio by the way, so that on my arrival in town those notes had developed into finished sketches.

The renewal of packing operations and receiving, and answering letters and telegrams, occupied the hours which succeeded my having deposited those sketches at the *Illustrated London News* office. Then there were the souvenirs sent me. One old friend who had heard of my impending departure sent a sufficiently large collection of wooden pipes, "in case I ran short of those useful commodities," to stock a tobacconist shop in the valley of the Euphrates or on the top of the Kop-Dagh, had such a speculation promised to be remunerative; while another—a dear old lady of my acquaintance—contributed a bottle of champagne, in case, as she put it in the little note which accompanied it, I should have "a sinking." She had also, with much forethought, attached to it a label, on which in bold round hand she had written "Glass with care," as if the ordinary materials of which champagne bottles were made were Cordova leather or cast steel. I have strange misgivings as to that particular bottle of soothing syrup having ever crossed the frontier of that Bohemia which is bounded by Tottenham Court Road on the east, that East for plunging into the farthest extremities of which I was now preparing; then there were slippers, too, deftly interwoven with "forget-me-nots" and "love lies bleeding"; pretty idea the latter—something

so gory and appropriate about it ; but, as I should be as likely to wear a respirator as slippers at the front, such delicate attentions were none the less appreciated because they were reserved for my return. Then, as night closes in, Bohemian neighbours drop in, in twos and threes, to wonder if we should ever meet again, and to hope one would not be shot, and to trust one would escape fever, and so on, till I was quite pleased when those kind spirits came to an anchor and in a cheerier mood bade me *bon voyage*, blew clouds from their several pipes of peace, and eventually came down in a body to see me off, with a hearty farewell by the night mail for Paris *en route* for Constantinople.



THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.



CHAPTER I.

THE DECLARATION OF WAR—EN ROUTE FOR CONSTANTINOPLE—
IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP—A RUSSIAN SPY—BETWEEN TWO
FIRES—ARRESTED—RUSTCHUK—THE COSSACKS—VARNA—
ON THE BLACK SEA—CONSTANTINOPLE—HOBART PASHA—
THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"—TREBIZOND—AN EASTERN
RECEPTION—TO KARS VIA ERZEROUH.

EUROPE was ablaze with it; the telegraphic wires of the world were vibrating with it; it was placarded on every hoarding of every city in the civilized world.

War had been declared! A holy war, in which Christianity and Islam would meet face to face; a war of aggrandizement, in which Russia would fight for the key to the Black Sea, which Turkey would as stubbornly defend; a war, in short, like many others, which with godly pretexts would cloak ulterior purposes.

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I was in Vienna, in a curious dilemma, for having ascertained on most reliable authority that since the declaration of war it had become utterly impossible to approach

Constantinople by way of the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmora, I found I had but one alternative, that of secreting the introductions I carried with me to the Turkish military authorities, and outflanking the rapidly concentrating Russian forces by making straight for Bucharest, and crossing thence, *viâ* Giurgevo, to Rustchuk.

Not a moment was to be lost, so, leaving my heavier luggage in Vienna, I started forthwith for the capital of Roumania, which amongst European cities looks at a first glance perhaps the most uninviting.

It was in the gloaming when I arrived; and when I started in a three-horse drosky for the hotel, I was most unpleasantly impressed by the scattered huts and insignificant houses which constituted that part of the tortuous main street nearest its ghostly looking railway station, where oil lamps and tallow candles struggled, dimly and in vain, to throw sufficient light on the miscellaneous wares of its insignificant shops.

Grim as everything appeared, there was at least a sense of relief that, so far, there was no evidence of Russian occupation. Alas! what a kaleidoscope of shifting scenes this life is! My best hopes were soon to be shattered, for, in five minutes, with a turn in the road, I found myself in that part of the *Grande Rue* to which the other was but a sleepy suburb; a sotnia of Cossacks wheeling down a bye street at this moment blocked the route. My drosky-driver pulled up, the jingling of the harness bells ceased, and there before me was Bucharest proper, its brilliant little shops now ablaze with light, its people wild with excitement, the very air seeming possessed of a sort of bugle mania. Regiments passed

hither and thither in quest of quarters, and officers in every imaginable Muscovite uniform hustled each other on the uneven pavement, and crammed to excess every *café* on the picturesque little boulevard, and there was I (pardon the first person singular), with credentials to high Turkish officials in my pocket, in the very midst of the enemy. It was a trying moment, I assure you. Indeed, I think it must have been the Calmuc cut of my countenance which prevented their discovering that there was "a chiel amang them takin' notes." Suffice it to say, after much jostling, I was put down at "The Concordia," where I verily believe every room, save my own, was occupied by a Russian.

It was too late that night to get farther; so, till early morning, I made the best of it. I do not think the strongest potations would have induced sleep, since everything hinged on my being able to get away the first thing next day. I think in this my knapsack (the only luggage I had brought on) assisted me. Carrying it unpretentiously in my hand I was allowed to pass, being supposed probably to be some harmless continental commercial who, having lost his way, was hurrying off to find that peace which Bucharest at that moment failed to afford.

There was at least little difficulty in starting early next morning for Giurgevo, and I breathed again, I assure you, as we left the station and I once more found myself in the open. The terminus reached, the Danube crossed, and then, once in European Turkey, I should be safe.

On arriving at Giurgevo, I hastened to the landing-stage; there before me lay the broad expanse of the

Danube's blue waters, dotted with the innumerable little islands round which its currents swirl, while straight away on the other side could distinctly be seen the forts, mosques, and minarets of Rustchuk.

"At last," I said to myself, "all will be well; and now for a boat." Ah! just so. Where were the boats? A



A RUSSIAN SPY.

shingly shore, with nothing on it but empty boat-houses. No boatmen. What could it all mean? However, it was a difficulty easily overcome. I could soon get someone to pull me across, or do it myself for the matter of that. I was wondering for the moment where best to apply, when

I perceived I had attracted the attention of a rubicund, military-looking man, with a curiously black moustache (strongly suggestive of hair-dye), close-shaven chin, and the air of an exquisite, who was standing not far from me on the landing-stage. I instinctively turned to him, and asked in French if he knew where I could secure a boatman. To my astonishment he replied, with the slightest possible accent, in excellent English.

“There are *no boatmen* and *no boats*. The passage of the Danube has been interdicted for three days.” And then he went on, “Am I right in supposing I am addressing an Englishman?”

“Yes, yes; I’m an Englishman; but what’s to be done? I *MUST* cross.”

“Quite impossible, I assure you. Any boat which approaches Rustchuk will be immediately sunk. It’s hopeless to think of it. May I offer you a cigarette?”

His *sang-froid* annoyed me. There was I, with the interests of the *Illustrated London News* at heart, within a triangle, two sides of which were hourly converging, a fringe of steel, on Giurgevo, while the third was represented by the seductive but uncrossable Danube. I thanked him curtly without accepting his proffered cigarette, and rushed off to find the mayor, governor—anyone, in fact, in authority to whom I might, as a sort of forlorn hope, appeal. The chief magistrate of Giurgevo, a most charming old gentleman, expressed the warmest sympathy with me in the difficulty in which I found myself; but the edicts of war were beyond his control. Death awaited those who should attempt a passage. What was I to do?

I went back to the landing-stage perfectly bewildered,

where, with provoking *nonchalance*, I found my friend of the rubicund complexion engrossed in a French novel.

"Any luck?" said he, looking up lazily from his book.

"None; I've tried every possible means."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Return to Bucharest, get thence through Hungary and Servia or Bulgaria to Constantinople."

"Again impossible; you came by the last train. The railway is now in possession of the military; besides, the Russians will occupy Fratesti (the next station to Giurgevo) to-night, and early to-morrow will be in Giurgevo itself."

I was curious to know how it was that this mysterious stranger should be so well-informed, and ventured—

"You are, I think, yourself a Russian?"

"I am," he said, with an air of candour, which under other circumstances would have been delightful. "I am an officer of the Secret Service. I think *you* call us spies—the term sounds less polite. By the way, what are *you*?"

I informed him that I was an artist.

"Ah! I thought so; you look like one. Could you, if necessary, prove it?"

I felt I was playing with fire; so I produced my sketch-book. He knew something of art evidently. Picking out a rough sketch I had made in passing a Roumanian village, which was certainly the best of the few I then had, he expressed himself delighted with it as he courteously returned me the book.

"It's unnecessary to say," he continued, assuming a sudden gravity, "that the one object of the Russians at the present moment is to cross the Danube."

"Just so."

"It being equally, of course, the one object of the Turks to prevent their doing so, you can imagine that a pretty high price would be put on reliable intelligence which, to that end, the Turks might obtain. *I* am in a position to give (for a consideration) the required information."

"But you are in the Russian service; and, moreover, why make *me* your confidant?"

"In the first place, because you are in our hands, and because it would not be worth your while to betray me, even if you could; and further, because I alone can help you, and you alone can help me. We have plenty of time to discuss the matter. You are safe till dawn to-morrow, at least. Will you sleep here to-night, or start to-day?"

"Where for?"

"Constantinople *viâ* Rustchuk."

"What! can *you* arrange this?"

"I can." With this he led the way to a small hotel near the landing-stage, where we were supplied with an excellent bottle of Rhine wine, which we proceeded to discuss. I was thunderstruck. "Of course, I make *special* conditions.—You convey to the Pasha of Rustchuk a document for which, if events turn out as it predicts—and *they will*—you will be amply compensated, I assure you. I have already arranged preliminaries. I have only to give the required information, and——"

"And how about the Russians?" I interrupted.

"Oh! they know how to take care of themselves—they *will* cross, come what may. I'm too patriotic not to feel that; and an officer of the Secret Service should never be too particular. He should make what you English call, I think, grass while the wind blows."

Not, however, to give you more than is necessary of our actual conversation, I will simply say that, feeling everything in love and war to be fair, and seeing I could only escape through the instrumentality of a refined villain from the clutches of those very Muscovites he was so willing to betray, I, appearing to agree with him, took the important document (closed up and addressed) with which he now entrusted me, while he in some most mysterious way secured three boatmen who, for seven English sovereigns (the ordinary fare, I think, being about the equivalent for fourpence) agreed to take the chance of a safe landing on the opposite shore. These men, exceedingly ignorant Greeks, did not evidently half realise the risk they ran, and to them seven pounds would be a mine of wealth. They had been plying (being local boatmen) backwards and forwards for years. Familiarity had bred contempt; thus, being only half-informed of the danger which awaited them and knowing nothing whatever of war, greed got the best of them; so they at length secured and launched a boat some little distance from the town, and awaited my arrival.

While these arrangements were being made by my friend the spy, I was not idle. The pen and ink with which he had addressed his betrayal of trust served a double purpose. Directly he left, I tore the sketch of the Roumanian village he had admired out of my sketch-book, writing on it the one word "*Souvenir*," while on the envelope of his despatch to the Turkish head-quarters at Rustchuk I wrote in a bold hand that which in my early literary days had so often applied to myself, the simple sentence of "*Returned, with thanks.*" This, with the sketch, I put into a large blue envelope which I had in

my knapsack, totally unlike the one it enclosed ; and, having placed it in my pocket, anxiously awaited his return. I was in some fear lest he should want to make some alteration in the document. Happily, however, this was not the case ; and beyond asking if it was safe, and giving me all sorts of definite instructions concerning it, nothing further transpired till we arrived at the spot where the three swarthy Greeks were awaiting us. Another moment, and I was afloat. The sturdy oarsmen gave one long stroke, and we swept out into the broad expanse which lay between ourselves and Rustchuk ; but the moment that that first stroke of the oars swept us from shore, I had my preconceived part to play. Waving the large blue envelope high in air, and shouting out, "*A souvenir* ; the sketch you took a fancy to," I flung it, with its mixed contents, on to the shingly shore where the Russian with a cynical smile stood watching my departure.

"You are sure *the other* document is safe," he shouted, in response.

"It couldn't be in safer custody," I replied ; and as we glided rapidly on I watched him, the envelope still unopened in his hand, with no little interest, till I saw him turn, with a self-satisfied air, towards the hotel ; and I felt for that astute officer of the Russian Secret Service when he should have leisure to discuss the contents of the blue envelope.

What a world of speculation was now before me ! What might, or might not, happen within the next quarter of an hour ! We were already more than half-way across, and I could now distinctly see the gunners at their posts, and a miscellaneous crowd on the beach looking on in blank

wonderment at the audacity with which a small boat full of men came to pull across that interdicted stream; and as if there was one thing wanting to add to my excitement, when they might open fire upon us at any moment, two boatmen out of the three began to show the white feather, and pulled round for dear life to gain the temporary shelter of some sunken barges. Happily, the steersman understood a little French, and was also the most self-possessed. I explained hurriedly to him that our only safety lay in pulling straight for the landing-stage—



MARCHED OFF TO PRISON.

indeed, had not his influence prevailed, it is impossible to say what the result might have been. Those few anxious moments seemed an eternity, each stroke of the oars bringing one nearer and nearer still to that swarthy group of red-fezzed soldiery, who, with sinister looks, awaited the infidels' arrival. Our keel grazed the shore; we were safe, but instantly surrounded. They took possession of our boat and seized us, marching us off, followed by all

the ragamuffins of Rustchuk, to the military prison at the rear of the town, where the never-to-be-forgotten Eastern custom of hospitality was not even in this case to be dispensed with, for black coffee and sweetmeats welcomed us here before we had been many minutes incarcerated. You see, we were not yet condemned ; hence we were, in some sense, guests. We were, of course, searched, and when it was found that I was a *bonâ-fide* representative of the English Press, and that my credentials were sound, we were speedily released. What actually became of the boatmen I never ascertained ; I only remember that, having been paid, they walked off in moody silence to make inquiries for their confiscated boat.

My first step was to present myself at the British Consulate ; the door was opened by a gorgeously-attired native, who was, however, perfectly eclipsed by the Consular cavasse who appeared from behind a curtained entry, one blaze of coloured velvet and gold lace. He conducted me into a small ante-room, there to wait till Consul Reid should be disengaged ; and there it was that I was much impressed (after the narrow escape I had so recently experienced) by hearing in an adjacent room, in a clear, manly voice, the words—

“ From battle, murder and sudden death, good Lord deliver us ! ”

It was the Consul reading the service to the few British residents who had assembled to hear him. I had lost touch of time for the moment, and this recalled to me the fact that it was Sunday. The Consul presently came in ; he was urbanity itself, professing genuine astonishment at my having been able to effect a landing—indeed, any hesi-

tation at that critical moment would, he assured me, have been fatal to us all.

It was the calm before the storm—the slow music before the rising of the curtain, which should display the first of the many shifting scenes which were about to be produced simultaneously at the two great theatres of war in Europe and Asia—rival houses, to continue the simile, under distinct management, each having its bright particular stars, from whom the world, as their audience, expected great things. The Russian forces were divided into the European, the Asiatic, and Caucasian armies, each replete with the most modern arms and other equipments.

The army of actual occupation amounted to 144,000 men, 32,800 horses, and 432 guns, with a second army, comprising two corps—that is to say, 72,000 men, 16,400 horses, and 216 guns—the two amounting to exactly 216,000 men, 49,200 horses, and 648 guns. It will be thus seen that the Russian had come to do or die, well supplied with men and all the impedimenta of war. Then, too, in justice be it said, the Russian is a good, albeit bibulous soldier, with all the hereditary instincts of the Slav. He is, to his officers, obedience itself; and take him all round, is not only well-drilled and disciplined, but possessed, as a rule, of that robust endurance and physical rather than moral courage which fits him so well for service at the front.

Of the officers I would say that they possess all the good and bad points of their men, to which they add the courtliest polish; and though to scratch a Russian may be to find a Tartar, Muscovite officers bear satisfactory comparison on the surface with men of their station and

time wherever they may be found. Nor have we yet touched on those hordes of Russian irregulars—the great Cossack contingent of free-lances, who have so long played an important part in Russian history.

He is rather squat in build is your rollicking Cossack, rosy and rotund about the nose, affecting, as a rule, a



A COSSACK.

fierce tow-coloured moustache and long hair. His chaco, not unlike a brimless beaver, he wears jauntily and somewhat askew, a huge grey great-coat and short jack-boots seeming to complete his outer aspect, unless we add his carbine, carefully wrapped in fur or oilskin, which swings across his shoulders, and the lance which he never fails

to have conveniently at hand. "But if in pursuit we go deeper," we shall find he is possessed of a revolver (a thoroughly good weapon), besides a long curved sword, which might be first cousin once removed to a scimitar, were it not for its ponderous proportions. He rides a weedy, gaunt pony, which, though it forcibly reminds one of certain melancholy processions one has seen in the direction of the knackers' yards in the Caledonian Road, is, nevertheless, as wiry as it is bony, and far more equal to forced marches and inadequate food than horses of finer mould.

The Cossack captain varies considerably; he is often a superior if not a highly-educated man, and not unfrequently an aristocratic ne'er-do-weel, who loves to strut *en grand seigneur* in eccentric magnificence as to costume before his troops. Cossacks, as a race, are more addicted to *vodka* than soap and water, and are as good fighting men as any irregulars which Europe or Asia can produce.

The foregoing notes were the joint result of my rapid run through Roumania—for it was literally a run for dear life—and the information I picked up at Rustchuk, from which, before sundown on the day of my arrival, I saw the double-headed Eagle hoisted at Giurgevo; so, had I hesitated that morning, I must inevitably have been taken.

Having left the Muscovites behind me, I naturally began to interest myself in the numbers and disposition of the Turkish forces, with whom, on my way to the army of Mukhtar Pasha, I was about to foregather. Now, the Turkish army amounted at the time of which I speak to 170,400, with a reserve force of 148,600 men, to say

nothing of 75,000 auxiliaries and 87,000 irregulars—numbering in all about 481,000 men, the European total being 367 battalions, 83 squadrons, 483 guns; while in Asia they numbered 165 battalions, 64 squadrons, and 372 guns. As to their bravery, it is impossible, from my point of view, to over-estimate it; besides which, they were not only well-armed, but inspired by a fanatical fire which placed them beyond comparison with the enemy. We were on the eve of a war not only of nations, but creeds, and there could be no doubt as to the religious fervour of the one as compared with the other.

Whatever the information may have been, and however reliable, which that Russian spy wished to convey through me as to the proposed point at which the Danube was to be crossed, it would probably have been negatived by subsequent tactics, as it was not till the last moment that I heard that simultaneous feints were to take place at many points, so as to weaken the Turkish line of defence; and that the troops, concentrated at its weakest spot, were to cross by pontoons into Bulgaria. Then came that delay—more terrible than action—the swollen state of the river, and Russian unpreparedness, all tending to postpone the inevitable steps which should in Europe herald the commencement of hostilities; but all this concerned and interested me very little at that particular moment, as my mission was to Asia Minor, and Danubian events were to form subject for other pencils than mine. Indeed, early on the day after I crossed, I started for Shumla, the headquarters of Abdul Kerim Pasha, and thence to Varna, where I awaited the first steamer on its way to Constantinople, and spent some

little time by the way in the camp of the Egyptian contingent, who were busy throwing up defences against an attack by sea on that port; nor can I imagine anything much more picturesque than those crowds of ebony warriors in white tunics, like so many gigantic ants, climbing busily in all directions over the huge earthworks which they were raising. Were this a political essay I might have much to say touching Varna as a strategical port, which, in the coming storm, might play a goodly part; but since I am disposed rather to convey some idea of the every-day life of a war artist at the front, I will confine myself to saying that Varna is a place on the beauties of which one cannot dwell, and which, not having yet slept in a Cossack camp, I found unpleasantly malodorous. It was here, however, that I made the acquaintance of Mr. Suter (son of the late Consul) and his wife, very charming people, who were hemmed in, unhappily, just then by the sudden turn of events. At my instance he wrote to several of the London papers offering his services as a correspondent, and, being accepted, he was enabled before long to emerge from what, to him at that time, was very like a prison-house to follow the fortunes of war in that capacity--his name, with that of his delicate young wife, coming, it will be remembered, some time afterwards prominently before the public in connection with their being taken by brigands while travelling in Macedonia.

I am indebted to Mr. Suter for securing for me one Williams, a Levantine, whose one idea at that moment was to get back to Constantinople, which, having no money, he looked upon as hopeless. I can quite imagine



CAPE KALI AKRA.

that the prospect of being shut up in Varna during a protracted war was not inviting. Williams, as I have said, a Levantine, spoke English with a slight accent which rather improved it than otherwise. Tall, swarthy as a Spanish mountaineer, and scrupulously neat, though very seedily dressed, this man seemed somehow to win me over. At a glance we understood each other, the result being that I agreed to take him to Constantinople as a sort of factotum; though in my own mind I had decided to promote him to the dignity of dragoman through the campaign, a position which he was peculiarly well fitted to fill, having been up country in Asia Minor a good deal, and being one of those born linguists who, associating the confusion of tongues one meets with in the East, are able to converse with "all sorts and conditions of men." In short, he was of all others the man I wanted, and thus it was that we were before long smoking the pipe—shall I say of peace?—together on board a steamer bound for the city of the Sultan.

Night had already set in, and a gale was springing up as we ploughed our way through that, to me, particularly Black Sea. The deck was crowded with miscellaneous groups of refugees, like some vast pic-nic of sea-sick travellers, who sat cross-legged round about us in every direction. Here were a number of yashmacked damsels; there a softa (student) or two, distinguishable by the peculiar shape of their white turbans. These, with a sprinkling of merchants, whose occupation, like Othello's, had gone; shepherds who had left their sheep to whatever fate might await them, together with nondescripts of every degree and nationality, were braving reluctantly the dangers of a

night on the Black Sea in view of those other and greater dangers which they left behind.

The approach to Constantinople, from every point, has been so often treated, that I should have made no reference to it had not Constantinople been conspicuous by its absence on my arrival next morning in the Bosphorus.

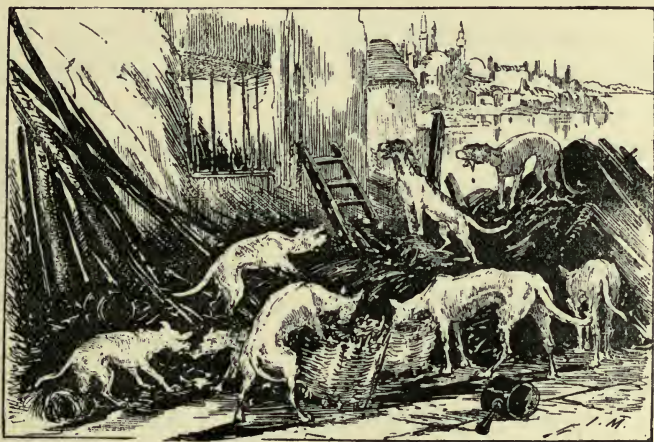
The Faithful on board, having been called to prayers, were devoutly kneeling as we glided up its comparatively still waters; the sun had risen and lit up the villages which adorn its European and Asiatic banks. It was like the play of *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

“Where,” I asked, “where is Constantinople?”

“There,” said Williams, pointing in the direction in which it *ought* to be, with a confidence which seemed to say, “I know it’s there somewhere”—and echo answered “where?” Then, suddenly, as if by some mighty magic, its mosques and minarets began to appear in mid-air, above a low-lying bank of clouds and grey morning mist, tinted as they did so by the salmon-pink light of the rising sun, which made the fog which surrounded them look doubly blue. This, too, began now to clear rapidly off, and the Golden Horn, Scutari, Galata, and the heights of Pera came, as in some marvellous transformation scene, into bold relief. There before me, where but a moment before all had been haze, rose the loveliest Oriental city in the world, reflected in the commingled waters of the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora, on which innumerable craft of every shape, colour, and size lay at anchor. Truly, Constantinople far exceeded all that my most erratic fancy had painted, and so with a well-sharpened appetite for the picturesque and breakfast I landed.

Never was the adage that "beauty is only skin deep" better exemplified.

O ye gods and little fishes! the effluvia of Galata before the historic dogs have discussed their morning meal of refuse. It's something terrible; at least, so I thought, as I hastened with Williams as guide, philosopher, and friend towards the *Mouse's Hole*, or the rope railway, which connects the low-lying shipping quarter of Galata with Pera, where I intended to take up my quarters for a



ROUND THE CORNER, GALATA.

few short hours while I decided what the next step should be.

The European and Asiatic quarters of Constantinople compared curiously: Pera being touched by the quicksilverish quiverings (if I may say so) of impending war, while Stamboul, with its spice-laden bazaars, its few dreamy camels, its philosophic salesmen in huge turbans and flowing robes, presented a perfect contrast in the shape

of that Eastern indolence which may be summed up in the one word "Kismet."

One of my first objects on arriving, after getting my necessary credentials together, was to avail myself of an introduction I had to Hobart Pasha. His yacht, the *Rethymo*, was in the Bosphorus, having just returned from running the gauntlet of the Russians on the Danube, an act of naval daring which added one more laurel to the fame of that grand old salt whose acquaintance I was about to make.

Although afterwards I felt quite at home on the trim-built little *Rethymo*, it was at the War Office that I made the Admiral's acquaintance.

Taking my dragoman with me, I waited in one of the great ante-rooms, into which entries heavily draped, and guarded by black servants, led from the many official cabinets in which the destinies of war were being discussed. Pashas crossed and re-crossed at intervals, till at length, followed by several bedizened attendants, and himself dressed in the effective uniform of the Turkish navy, with his honours thick upon him, came Hobart Pasha, the great blockade-running captain, to whom my dragoman now presented my letter of introduction, which came from a Mr. Myers, one of his old school-fellows.

It was pleasant to see that otherwise iron face brighten up with the light of other days as he scanned the note. The next moment he had most cordially greeted me, and bid me join him on the following day on his yacht, where he narrated to me all the details of the escape he had just had from the Russians when running the blockade of the Danube. In fact, I think I cannot do better than



A TURKISH RECEPTION.

quote here the graphic description of it which I gather from his Memoirs.

“I had with me a very fast paddle-steamer called the *Rethymo*; her captain and crew were what the Turks always are, brave as lions and obedient as lambs. I took on board a river pilot, whom I gave to understand that if he got me on shore I would blow his brains out. Before starting I sent for my officers and crew, and told them of the perhaps unnecessary dangers we should run in passing the Russian barrier, and gave to all the option of leaving or going on. They decided to a man to go on. I arranged my time so as to pass Braila and Galatz during the night. We arrived to within thirty miles of the former place about 5 o'clock in the evening, when I was met by a Turkish official, who was leaving Braila on the war having broken out. He was fearfully excited, and begged me on his knees not to go to what he called certain destruction. He told me that he had seen the Russians laying down torpedoes that same day, that the batteries were numerous, and that they were aware of my coming, &c., all of which I took with a considerably large grain of salt, and left him lamenting on my mad folly, as he called it.

“Now, I must be candid. I did not *feel* the danger. I calculated that to put down torpedoes in a current such as that in the Danube would be a matter of time, and probably they would not succeed after all. I had a plan in my head for passing the batteries, so as to render them harmless. So in reality I was about to attempt no very impossible feat.

“Three hours after dusk we sighted the lights of Braila. The current was running quite five knots an hour; that,

added to our speed of fifteen, made us to be going over the ground at about twenty knots. It was pitch dark; and I think it would have puzzled the cleverest gunner to have hit us, though they might have done so by chance. I determined not to give them a chance, by going so close under the bank that the guns could hardly be sufficiently depressed to hit us. As we approached the batteries, to my horror a flash of red flame came out of the funnel (that fatal danger in blockade-running), on which several rockets were thrown up from the shore and a fire was opened where the flame had been seen.

“Meanwhile we had shot far away from the place, close under the batteries. I heard the people talking; every now and then they fired shot and musketry, but I hardly heard the whiz of the projectiles. My principal anxiety was that we might get on one of the many banks so common in the Danube, and I had perhaps a *little* fear of torpedoes, especially when we passed the mouths of the little estuaries that ran into the Danube. Once we just touched the ground; but, thank goodness, we quickly got free, and though fired at by the guns and rifles went on unhurt. It took us exactly an hour and forty minutes to pass these dangerous waters, and the early summer morning was breaking as we cleared all danger. I could not resist turning round and firing a random shot at the banks studded with Russian tents, now that I was able to breathe freely again.”

But to return to the War Office, where in this case I had been fortunate enough, owing to my introductions, to secure an interview with Hobart Pasha without that circumlocution one has on such occasions, as a rule, to put up with.

I remember that, later on in the campaign, having made an effort to see certain Russian prisoners, said to be in durance vile, I spent hours going from one pasha's sanctum to another's; by each I was assured that the one to whom he directed me was *the* particular man in authority to whom I should apply for that particular object; in each case were black coffee, cigarettes, and sweetstuff placed at my disposal, the urbane pasha insisting on my taking this light refreshment before I proceeded on my weary way to that other pasha who, without doubt, was *the* one in authority over such matters. At length, when the patience of Williams and myself had been nearly exhausted, a kindly old Effendi to whom we had been sent took compassion on us, telling us in a melodramatic whisper, quite as a sort of state secret, that, as a matter of fact, there were no prisoners at all within 200 miles of that particular place at that time, and that it was only a report which had been circulated for political motives. Describing my sketch in the *Illustrated London News*, of that circumstance, in his graphic description of my waiting for an audience with Hobart Pasha, I find the verdict of that inimitable writer, George Augustus Sala, to be "If you want to see a Turkish Pasha, don't wait; go in and find him"; and certainly the tendency of the casual messenger whom you send in to inquire if their mightinesses will receive you is, as a rule, to disappear by some mysterious back exit, and be seen no more.

Of course I was fascinated by Constantinople, everybody is; from its howling dogs to its howling and dancing dervishes, from its mysterious looking, yashmacked Moslem girls to its terrible Turks, all savoured too much of

Eastern romance and picturesqueness not to at once win the heart of anyone, especially one with any pretensions to being an artist.

However, finding that I might remain inactive for some time pending the movements of the fleet, I elected to go by an Austrian Lloyds' steamer to Trebizond, which, after remaining a couple of days in order to make certain necessary arrangement, I proceeded to do. Before leaving, I inspected by special desire Captain O'Hara's contingent of Polish Lancers (I think there were three all told), and also the forces of a certain Captain Harris (no relation to Mrs. Harris of mythical renown), which did not quite come up to that complement. I was introduced too, by Captain Harris to two wandering Englishmen, quixotically bent on adventure, who were as yet undecided as to which of these shining lights they should offer their swords; but of them, and those distinguished officers, more anon.

It was night as we steamed down the torpedo-intersected Bosphorus *en route* for Trebizond, so I saw little of my fellow passengers. Early next morning, however, I was on deck, and there met a very genial gentleman, who was destined to be with me in many of my coming experiences in Asia Minor. He was a Mr. Charles Holmes, a recently-appointed war correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian*. As he stood there, smoking the daintiest of cigarettes, and wearing as he did embroidered slippers, and an equally elaborate smoking cap, he looked as unlike the ideal correspondent going to the front as it is possible to imagine; and that he, in a few short weeks, should turn out the rough campaigner which he did was truly marvellous; at one time an exquisite who would

have made a lovely centre to a group of girls at a five o'clock tea-table, again, a thorough soldier, equal to anything, ever on the alert, "waiting," like Mr. Micawber, "for something to turn up," and what's more, ready to grapple with it when it did.

After discharging cargo at several ports *en route*, we arrived eventually off Trebizond. I shall not easily forget my first glimpse of the town, which nestled snugly down in the centre of the great bay of that name. A typical Eastern one it was, with its squat-built white houses, intersected with cypress and fig trees, a curious mixture of mud and semi-barbaric beauty, capped by the domes and minarets of its many mosques and baths.

But how about those gigantic magpies perched on the house tops and shingly shore, who seemed ready at any moment to soar into mid air at one's approach? The surf here was so high that special surf boats were necessary for landing, so that before the one in which Holmes and myself were came nearer inland my curiosity had been strangely aroused by these apparently odd ornithological wonders; but we soon found that just as "birds of a feather flock together," so will women, and that our supposed gigantic magpies were Anatolians, in the curious black and white yashmacked costume of that part of the world, which gave them, perched as they were on every available wall and house-top awaiting our arrival, so unique an appearance.

Having landed, and proceeded to the one hotel of the place, our first consideration was to hold a council of war, and arrange about the many equipments necessary to our journey up country. It was no small matter of considera-

tion to settle to our mutual satisfaction that plan of campaign which eventually resulted in Williams being dispatched to procure horses for ourselves, an araba (native cart) for provision, an arabaji (driver), together with a sort of general utility man, one Johannes, whose gorgeous costume vied with the one Williams obtained for himself, together with a small troop of Zaptiahs (guards), equally picturesque and well mounted. Judging from the arsenal of small arms they carried, they would be terrible to encounter, which indeed was consoling, since we were assured by Mr. Billiotti, the English consul, that without an escort it would be impossible to get safely to Erzeroum, which was our first halting place of any importance, and we were not a little proud besides of our followers.

That night we dined at the Consulate, and though we did not meet the Princess of Trebizond, of operatic celebrity, it was only owing to the existence of that lady in song rather than in fact, for nothing was left undone by our genial host to afford us a right royal welcome. It was on leaving the consulate towards the small hours that I experienced sensations which I shall not easily forget. Preceded by the consular cavass, gorgeously arrayed in a most effective garb, swinging a huge Eastern lantern before us as he went, and followed by several servants of equally magnificent appearance, we felt as we went a peculiar sense of personal importance, the ground crunching beneath us as we trod, which elated us not a little. As far as I was concerned, I remember few moments in my life when I have been so thoroughly self-satisfied; the surroundings of Eastern magnificence were quite invigorating. A glance, however, on the ground, where the light of that lantern

flashed, brought me unpleasantly back to myself; the road was literally alive, one surging, undulating mass of the huge black-beetles peculiar to Asia Minor. Like a plague of locusts, they were simply everywhere; hence the *crunching* sound to which I have made reference, and since from my very babyhood I would rather at any time, I think, have encountered a bandit than a black-beetle, you may imagine my suddenly altered gait, my exceedingly undignified aspect. That vigorous, self-satisfied strut, of which I was so proud, vanished instantly as I tried in vain, mincingly on tip-toe, to pick my way through the scaly mass, lit up every now and then by the light which our advanced guard carried.

The next morning, at an early hour, Williams came to say that by mid-day our stores would be packed in the araba and everything ready for starting; also that, hearing that two English pashas were passing through, Schamyl, the nephew of the great Schamyl, and commander of the White Circassians, would come to salaam us, the English pashas, and wish us well in the name of Allah. Shortly afterwards, we were informed that His Mightiness was in the stone hall of the hotel awaiting us.

Followed by our men and the faithful Williams, we were soon in his presence. He was seated, cross-legged, on an ottoman, with his several followers around him. He made the most profound obeisance when we entered, and after telling us that he was as nothing in our sight, began to make the most amiable inquiries after the Queen of the Green Island (Her Majesty), and her royal sons. Having answered these and many other similar questions, and assured him that the shadow of Schamyl under any cir-

cumstances never could grow less, we returned his salaams, ordered black coffee and sweetmeats for his special refec-tion, and so got over our first Eastern reception; but whether he was supposed to receive us, or we him, is a moot point which we have not yet, any of us, decided.

Oh, the clatter, the din of that departure, the tinkling bells of the horses as the arabaji whipped up his bony steeds and dashed off in advance; then the hooting and yelling, and the eternal *ider, ider, ider!* (go on) of our guards as that very irregular force got into position in our rear. Consul Billiotti wished us a cordial farewell, giving us certain packages and letters to deliver personally into the hands of the Consul of Erzeroum, and then waving our adieux we trotted down the long street past the Consulate and the Great Bazaar till a turn in the road hid us, for many weary months, from the last vestiges of ordinary civilization.

We had not long left the town which, backed by the Black Sea, now lay in a hollow to our rear, when we plunged into one of the densest forests it has ever been my fortune to pass through. I know the Black Forest—which is not half so black, by the way, as it is painted—and indeed am familiar generally with woodland scenery all over Europe, and in many parts of Asia, but that forest through which we passed, chiefly composed of box trees of gigantic size, eclipsed them all for density. Its silence, too, after the busy world we had just left behind us, was almost appalling; we were many hours in its semi-darkness, and though wolves and other uncanny creatures were said to be numerous, we heard no sound whatever, save that of our horses' hoofs, on the almost

untrodden bridle path. On emerging we found ourselves on a vast open plain, across which we made great haste so as to secure before nightfall our first khan, or resting-place.

To "all who love the pleasure of going to the play," as the old song puts it, whose experience of a "first night" may be confined to a theatre, I may say that when it is at the theatre of war—if it be in Asia Minor—it is a curiously memorable one. On the village (if I may call it so) being reached, the traditional bread and salt are first produced, of which all must partake; a stable is then placed at your service, where with your horses you are supposed to rest for the night, but as generations of sheep and shepherds have left myriads of ticks, bugs, fleas, and—well, you may guess what else—behind them, you find your first twelve hours in an Asiatic khan barely endurable; you are, figuratively speaking, eaten alive by the smallest yet most invincible army in the world; and so you can well imagine how welcome under such circumstances to the irritated, weary traveller is the first streak of dawn. Black coffee, black bread and *youart* (sour curdled milk, which is looked on as such a luxury that the natives think it a sin to touch it when fresh) form the morning meal, generally discussed about five or six o'clock, after which the journey up country is continued.

It was on the day following our departure from Trebizond—we were still suffering agonies from the armies in occupation of our clothes—that, glad at mid-day to halt for the necessary two hours' siesta, we fell in with a troop of Circassians, a squadron of Schamyl's light horse,

amongst whom were two who, to our utter astonishment, accosted us in English with—

“ Well ! who ’d have thought of seeing you ? ”

On their nearer approach they turned out to be the two adventurers I had met, it will be remembered, in Constantinople, who were at that time undecided whether they would join Colonel O’Hara’s Polish Lancers, thereby increasing the complement of that regiment to five all told, including the colonel, or Captain Harris’ corps, which was, I think, composed of a trumpeter and himself. They had, however, ultimately joined the Circassians, and were now on their way to Kars. They were already, they told me, a little doubtful about the *camaraderie* of their brothers in arms, having been eased of all their superfluous etceteras and cash during their first night’s halt.

Affairs were just now rapidly developing. Away in Europe the Russian army of the South was looking about for a convenient point for crossing the Danube, while that of the Caucasus, under the Grand Duke Michael, was marching on Kars. The defences of the Black Sea in the meantime appeared to have been forgotten, since, during our run from Constantinople, it became too evident that a bold commander might at many points, had he not been intercepted by Hobart’s ironclads, have effected an easy landing. The batteries around Sinope, though said to be well traced, were not half finished—another baleful illustration of Turkish “kismet,” while Trebizond, the great commercial point from which the Anatolian as well as Persian markets were supplied, was absolutely defenceless, all the Turkish military resources seemingly having been lavished on Batoum, which was most inconveniently

situated as far as its proximity to the Russian frontier was concerned. Indeed, torpedoes seem to have been the great naval mainstay of the Turks during this war, those fired by electricity from the shore being chiefly used ; they were unusually large and cylindrical in shape, containing some 1,000 lbs. of coarse-grained powder, and so disposed as to float within 35 feet of the surface. At this juncture the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Scotsman*, and the *Illustrated London News* might have been seen, as G. P. R. James loved to put it in those delightful old stories of his, "wending their weary way across the lonely heath," varied in this case by snow-capped highlands and verdant valleys, in the direction of Erzeroum, *en route* for Kars.



CHAPTER II.

MUKHTAR PASHA — A PASHA'S TENT — A VILLAGE IDIOT —
BRIGANDAGE — A METHOD FOR DISPERSING BRIGANDS — A
HARD MARCH — OUR GUIDE DESERTS — ERZEROUM — CONSUL
ZOHRAH — VULTURES — A PRICE ON "PITH HELMETS" —
BAKSHEESH — THE DEVIL'S FIRESTONE — ANATOLIA.

A LIFE on the ocean wave may have charms for some, though the eternal uncertainty of its wicked ways may do something to mar one's appreciation of it; if, indeed, I were called on to describe the most delightful life under the sun, I should, much as I personally like the briny, leave the sea out of the question, and hark back to those "pleasant old days of the past," when leaving that element behind me, well mounted and full of the brightest expectations, I rode up country in the direction of Erzeroum. I refer, be it understood, to those hours out of the twenty-four spent in the open, since I would erase for ever from my memory those would-be sleeping moments passed in Asiatic khans.

As far as one could judge, it seemed that the recent Russian victory at Ardahan had paralyzed for the moment the hand of Mukhtar Pasha, towards whose camp I was hastening, threatening as it did, indirectly, Erzeroum and

even the base of operations, Trebizond itself, towards which, with his—numerically speaking—very inferior forces, many thought Mukhtar would have retreated, leaving Kars and Erzeroum to their fate; but he was too good a player at the game of war not to hold this last card in reserve, and by a series of clever movements he drew on the foe, giving battle just where he had in each case decided—this, too, against great odds, not only as far as the numbers of the enemy were concerned, but in the utter want of all order as to his reinforcements and supplies.

Being sent to take supreme command in Asia too late to go in for any systematic organization of his own, he at least hoped for support from the rear; indeed, for some time, he was absolutely without cavalry, save a few troopers, who were barely enough for orderly duty; while, on the other hand, the Russians had 15,000 cavalry on the frontier observing his movements, at a moment when Mukhtar had not the wherewithal to make an ordinary reconnaissance, though certainly he was afterwards reinforced by 500 Circassians and 50 Kurdish irregulars, who were soon busily occupied scouring the enemy's frontier.

In the meantime we were another day's march nearer camp, again ensconced, as I have said, in a dirty khan, foregathering as usual with sheep, buffaloes, goats, and oxen. On our third night up country we became so disgusted with the utter filth of our surroundings, that, having made what meal we could off youart, black bread, *pilaff* (rice boiled in grease from the tails of native sheep), we elected to sleep in the open, rather than submit to another night with the animalcules of a khan.

Now it happened that Holmes had brought with him a curiously striped tent from Constantinople, which we found, at a pinch, would accommodate us all ; so we erected it in the narrow village roadway, which it completely occupied, and, lying down booted and spurred, though as yet new to campaigning in Asia Minor, we were soon all fast asleep.

It was early dawn when I was awakened suddenly by a horribly tickly-creepy sort of sensation all over me, and in a few seconds—far less time than I take to describe it—I found myself outside our tent vigorously shaking myself, which to those inside must have appeared most ludicrous ; for now and again, I remember, I varied the shaking by a grotesque hop, fantastic skip, and idiotic jump, followed by a loud scrunch, and a still louder big, big “D,” which proclaimed that yet another black beetle had gone over to the majority. The tent I discovered was literally alive with them.

The heat of this little excitement over, I became suddenly aware of bustle and commotion all round me.

Surely the whole village, aware of my great antipathy to black beetles, had not come out to see my most undignified expressions of horror !

Had I been mistaken for an acrobat ? No ; oh, dear no ! a thing far more absurd than this had happened, I soon discovered ; the jabber of hundreds of voices in many tongues was tremendous ; while, far above the babel of humanity came the braying of asses, snorting of camels, and the peculiar low grunt of buffaloes—in truth, a whole army-corps of nondescript irregulars had halted just behind us on their way to the army of Ahmed

Mukhtar Pasha. We found they had actually been waiting patiently there for many hours—poor things!—not having dared to disturb the most illustrious Pashas who, sleeping so soundly, had thus blocked the way.

It was Holmes's tent that had done it. The stripes, we discovered, denoted a Pasha of high degree; a fact of which, though innocent till then, we did not fail to avail ourselves on many subsequent occasions, and so, assuming a virtue we did not possess, we struck our tent, magnanimously and graciously, as great Pashas should, and allowed the long, straggling contingent to defile past us, while we discussed our primitive breakfast.

I think, since our mode of life and surroundings, as far as our halts were concerned, were all more or less alike, I may describe, once for all, what sort of place an ordinary up-country Anatolian village is.

In the first place, you are never quite sure, coming from higher ground, if you are in a village street—or on its house-tops, which are made of mud and rough-hewn trees; and since these roofs are perfectly flat, having holes in the centre, which serve for chimneys, it is not at all an uncommon thing, when walking unsuspectingly along, to slip through some weak point, and suddenly find yourself on the floor of a khan; indeed, one correspondent, riding in hot haste from the heights above, actually went head over heels, horse, rider, and all, into one of these mud cabins, much to the danger of himself and its inmates.

There is no evidence of shops in these clusters of rough hovels, the great khan being the caravanserai at which all travellers stop, and where all supplies and information, such as they are, are to be found.

Big-eyed buffaloes wander at will through what, I suppose, for want of a better name, one must call its main street; while the camels of the passing stranger pick up unconsidered trifles where they can.

The absence of a sufficient supply of water is much felt of course by Europeans, the nearest stream being, as a rule, at some considerable distance, though the natives have, I understand, never been heard to complain on that score, having no maudlin sentiment with reference to water, save perhaps for the purpose of coffee making. We did occasionally find a primitive Turkish bath, which we invariably made our quarters for the night: a place, I assure you, which rough though it might be, considering our exceptional ablutions, was something to be sought after.

Curiously enough, few villages were without their idiot, or, as they in more complimentary terms put it—their Wise Man. Very much to be envied, too, is this village fool:

“He takes a side glance and looks down.
Beware!”

I always had a strong suspicion that he was not by any means such a fool as he looked. He was fed, clothed, and idolized, his parents if alive being thought specially favoured by Allah. He had a seat in every khan, and dreamed away a most negative existence at his own sweet will. The village idiot is supposed to exercise charms of every imaginable kind, and to make him presents of beads or tinsel finery, or to deck his long unkempt hair with grass or weeds is thought a special privilege.

The people in the villages keep very much within their

mud hovels, which is, perhaps, just as well, for what with their faces, bedaubed with indigo, their nails tinted a bright saffron with henna, and their generally begrimed appearance, they do not improve the aspect of their miserable surroundings from a comfortable point of view; though, picturesquely speaking, dirty yashmaes, turbans, many coloured unmentionables, gaudy jackets, arms of every obsolete description, and pointed shoes have special



THE VILLAGE IDIOT.

attractions. Brigandage too, was, at the time of which I write, so much an institution in Asia Minor that it would have been difficult to say which villages were or were not affected, though some were inhabited wholly and solely by gentlemen who devoted themselves to the desperate craft of "stand and deliver"; and marvellously picturesque some of these fellows were, with their bril-

liant belongings and formidable-looking weapons, as they galloped from ambush to try conclusions with the passing traveller.

Half way between Trebizond and Erzeroum lies Baiburt, a town small enough in itself but, by comparison with the tiny villages we had passed, of no little importance. We put up at the chief khan, which overlooked the market-place. Here we heard that two of the sons of Queen Victoria had recently passed through. It appeared that they were accorded a regal reception by those poor benighted people, at which they themselves expressed no little astonishment, which can be easily understood, as I afterwards learnt they were the two sons of Consul Zohrab of Erzeroum who had been thus glorified, as they were returning from school at Smyrna.

While partaking of what scant refreshment Baiburt afforded, we saw that no ordinary excitement was going on outside ; so, while our horses and men rested, we strolled out to ascertain its cause.

It appeared that two brigands had just been caught red-handed, having murdered a woman in the pass which we had presently to go through ; and, as a sort of lynch law exists in this part of the world, they were then and there executed—having been first blindfolded by the troops of the garrison (six in number), who sent them with one volley “to that bourne whence no traveller (or bandit) returns.”

We were implored by the Kaimakan, a sort of local governor, to remain till it should be ascertained that the band had dispersed, for we were assured there were nearly thirty lying in ambush in the Black Valley. Time,

however, was far too important for us to listen to this urgent appeal, especially since Williams, in whom we all most thoroughly believed, declared that two or three Britishers were more than a match for any number of such men. So we returned to the khan, where we informed our escort of the difficulties, at the same time assuring them that any show of cowardice would mean death at our hands. This was a precautionary step considered necessary by the dragoman. With many salaams and protestations of devotion, they went to the shed at the rear, first coming back with our horses, then returning for their own.

Now this shed was some little distance from where we were; so, having mounted, we awaited their arrival, meanwhile accepting the repeated apologies of the Kaimakan for not adding a few soldiers to our number, since he required his little army of six for the defence of the town, should the brigands attack it, a difficulty which we perfectly understood.

We had perhaps waited thus for ten minutes, when I sent Williams to ascertain the cause of their delay. Imagine his astonishment, on entering, to find that our fickle followers had bolted by some back exit, and made for the mountains, galloping no doubt for dear life, so as to circumvent the brigands, from whom they were specially appointed to protect us. Nothing, then, was left to us but to make the best of it. So we started.

Our great difficulty was our araba; the horses, however, were fresh, and the arabaji too stupid to realize the danger of the situation till he found himself in it,

when we trusted he would be too scared to do anything but whip up his bony steeds with a vigour begotten of sheer funk. It was a novel sensation, this of going out deliberately to cut our way through a band of marauders; but it had to be done somehow, supplemented, as it was, by a few general suggestions from our professional adventurer, Williams.

"Slowly, at first, gentlemen—slowly, at first. Wait till you come up with them, then put in your spurs; let fly with your revolvers, scream, yell, and hoot at the top of your voices, and they'll run like rabbits—take my word for it."

We had by this time cleared the town; indeed, had gone some distance, and were on the point of slowly descending into the dismal gorge below, when, in breathless haste, the youngest of our four guards came galloping from the rear to join us. It is pleasant to record the name of Memshe, for he was the *one* man with a conscience out of the four miserable wretches who had deserted us.

"Pasha, I bite the dust," he said, when he had regained breath. "I fall prostrate before you." He did neither of these things, by the way. "But Allah be praised, I have come back in time to be with you; from henceforth *your* road shall be *my* road, *your* dangers *my* dangers, and with *you* will I fall, if need be, into the abyss of Al Sâhira" (hell). This, roughly speaking, was the gist of Memshe's high-flown address.

At a gentle jog-trot, followed closely by the araba, we descended that dark hollow, made more obscure at every yard by the intensely thick overhanging foliage. Suddenly

with a turn in the path, there sure enough, in the half light, could we see a formidable crowd of picturesque cut-throats awaiting us, their long Armenian guns peeping out from the overgrown roadside in every direction ; nor had we gone many paces farther when several shots were sent as a sort of warning to "Bail up."

"Stop a bit ; not yet," said Williams, as cool as the proverbial cucumber ; "not yet. Now ! Now put it on ; fire into them anyhow, and yell like devils !"

And then it was that a sound re-echoed through those woods—a curious medley of revolver shots and demoniacal exclamations—which, while I write, comes vividly back to me, and which had the effect of scaring those ruffians as they were never scared before by mortal man. One of their number lay wounded at the bottom of the glen, and the rest were scampering away in every direction, terrified by dint of sheer, well-timed "bogyism." Not that I would have it supposed that these ruffians were, by any means, so contemptible as our hasty disposal of them may have led you to infer ; a large number of well-armed knaves, with a zest for murder, are not at any time to be disposed of with smiles which are "child-like and bland," and thus with such trying odds against us, deserted as we were by three out of four of our escort, it was really only a sort of pasha panic amongst these rapsallions which could save us from the clutches of those at whose hands our treatment at best would have been barbarous. We happily, however, had saved our supplies and ourselves, and though it was impossible to pursue them, we were not on that side of Erzeroum again interfered with, our reputation having gone before us, as

being, what translated would be tantamount to the "White Demons."

Ah! yes, of course; you want to know what became of the other three.

Well, two hours afterwards we found them bivouacked quietly by the hill side, awaiting our arrival, when they asked us, with absolute *sang-froid*, "How we got through," and had the audacity to assure us that had they been there too they would have fought like lions; that they were all with us in spirit—but why not in person, too? They could not for the life of them make out, unless it was—indeed, it must have been—*Kismet*.

The country now becoming more mountainous, our difficulties daily increased; besides the big guns, ammunition, and commissariat stores, which every now and then were being brought from the coast, often delayed our less important little cavalcade for hours. Perhaps the most difficult ascent we made was that of the Kop-dagh, 11,000 feet above sea level. Long before we reached the summit we found ourselves beyond the snow-line, which, after the heat of the lowlands we had not long left, was, I need hardly say, somewhat trying. I never in my life felt so utterly and completely overawed as I did here by the intensely weird silence of the surroundings. We were far above vegetation, save where a sort of edelweiss here and there peeped up timidly from its snowy seclusion. The place had the appearance of being haunted by the very demon of solitude; even one's footfall on those snow-clad heights was noiseless. Here, too, we had to pass the night, with no better shelter than that which our tents afforded; but we had anticipated this, so had brought with us what

wood we could gather by the way, and were thus able to start with that greatest of all considerations to campaigners—a good fire. Then our tents were pitched, and a savoury brew of hot tea, together with eatables of which we had sufficient in reserve in the araba, soon put a more cheerful aspect on affairs. We were worn out too with a long day's ride over difficult country, so after a pipe or two round the camp-fire, which we had lit midway between our tents, we turned in, and were soon fast asleep.

I was awoke early next morning by Williams shaking me vigorously.

“Get up, Sir; he's bolted. We shall be in for it if you're not quick.”

“Bolted—in for it—who? What do you mean?”

“Why, the arabaji has left us in the lurch—struck for higher wages—knows we can never leave this place without a guide; and as he is the only man amongst us who knows the way to Erzeroum, I should like to know what we are to do.”

It was all too true; the arabaji was the only one who knew the way over those mountain heights, so we were really at his mercy.

“One thing only can be done, Sir,” Williams went on; “and that is for *you* to catch him, give him a sound hiding, bring him back by the scruff of his neck, and mount him again on the araba. That's the only thing to bring him to his senses. He will probably draw his knife; but don't, whatever you do, show your revolver *unless* you mean to shoot him. Let him see that you are quite superior to anything of the kind. If he becomes dangerous, knock him down. Were I to do it, the dose

would have to be repeated every day till further notice ; if you do it, it will be once for all. He will never forget it, any more than he will forget to ask for backsheesh on our sighting the minarets of Erzeroum."

I at once saw the advisability of following the arabaji, and was not long in catching him up. It struck me he would have looked (as he clumsily waddled away) not unlike some disconcerted bear, had not his quaint Asiatic gun negated the idea. It was not a long chase ; the



AN UNWILLING GUIDE.

Asiatic notion of pace is not an exalted one. Knowing nothing of his language, I had to use arguments more forcible than words. Several good cuffs brought him to a standstill, and after gazing at me in a dazed sort of way, he permitted me to turn him right-about in the direction of our encampment, and, although the most stubborn mule never resisted more doggedly, I eventually, by dint of many blows and much frantic shouting, succeeded in getting him into our midst. Now, however, that he could



A CORDON OF CORRUPTION.

make himself understood, he became a different man. He absolutely refused to budge an inch, unless fabulous sums were given him; but seeing that his threats at deserting were of no avail, and that we were about to lift him bodily into his seat, he turned on me as the leader of the attacking party with a look of savagery which I can to this day remember, and fumbling clumsily in his leathern girdle, drew out a huge knife, with which he essayed to make a desperate lunge at me, just as prophetic Williams had predicted. This looked fearfully formidable; but with a man who hadn't the remotest idea of using his fists it was no very difficult matter to come to a satisfactory conclusion, and the next incident in that arabaji's otherwise uneventful life was to find himself rolling in the snow, out of which he presently crept ignominiously to pick up his bloodless knife, mount the waggon, and drive on in the direction of Erzeroum without more ado.

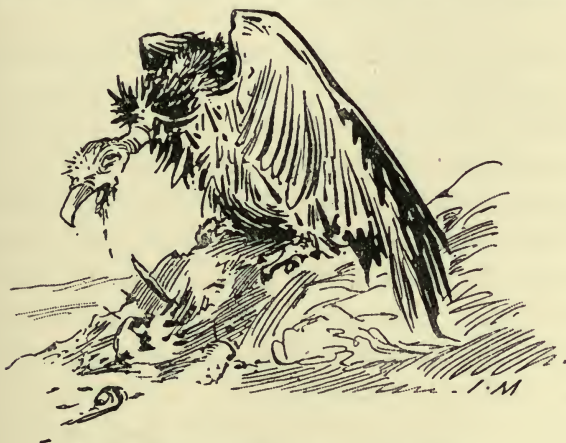
Several weary days of ordinary Eastern travel now elapsed, which, save for the necessary impedimenta of war which hourly closed in upon and passed us, were of no marked interest.

The heat too, in the lowlands, became unbearable, compared with our recent semi-arctic experiences, and when, from a slight elevation, towards sundown one evening we saw the domes, mosques, and minarets of Erzeroum standing out in black relief against a saffron sky, we felt a thrill of delight which can only be appreciated by those who after many roving years again see the white cliffs of old England from the deck of a homeward-bound vessel.

The reputation of Zohrab, the British Consul, had long since gone before him. There was a kindly welcome awaiting us there we knew, for we all felt that in Erzeroum we should find that pearl beyond price—a friend. This feeling, however, was unshared by the arabaji, whose one idea was to improve the shining hour by demanding back-sheesh, it being a custom with native drivers to be paid on sighting the minarets of the town which is their destination. The hiding he had had produced the most wholesome result, and when with a cheery voice he asked for extra pay as compensation for it, I almost felt when giving it to him that I was rewarding him for special services.

No, certainly Eastern towns do not improve on close acquaintance; the effluvia which the exhalations of innumerable carcasses sent up as we entered Erzeroum by one of the narrow drawbridges which cross the fosse, into which every description of decomposing matter seems to be indiscriminately thrown, was, I assure you, anything but agreeable. This dry ditch in olden days, no doubt, was used for purposes of defence. It had now become a cordon of disease, more fruitful than the most promising open drain could ever pretend to be. The quick and the dead commingle here curiously; the jackal, wolf, and man-eater contest their right of occupation with vultures, bustards and carrion crows, *all* equally intent on the banquet which lies festering before them. Indeed, to these gourmandizers the natives feel they owe so great a debt of gratitude that to kill one is considered murderous to the last degree, and he whose unfortunate revolver does the deed is shunned as an uncanny thing by those who witnessed the act.

I remember being fascinated on one occasion, after an engagement near Zevin, by the huge proportions of a vulture, which had so overgorged itself on human flesh that it could only hop languidly about in a most absurdly intoxicated manner, and presented so favourable a mark that I dismounted, and had not my dragoman come to the rescue I should certainly have shot it with a view to preserving its skin, and thereby have incurred the hatred of all those with whom I afterwards came in contact, who



“NO MORE, THANK YOU; I COULDN'T!”

would, I was informed, have at once been told to beware of the “Vulture Slayer.”

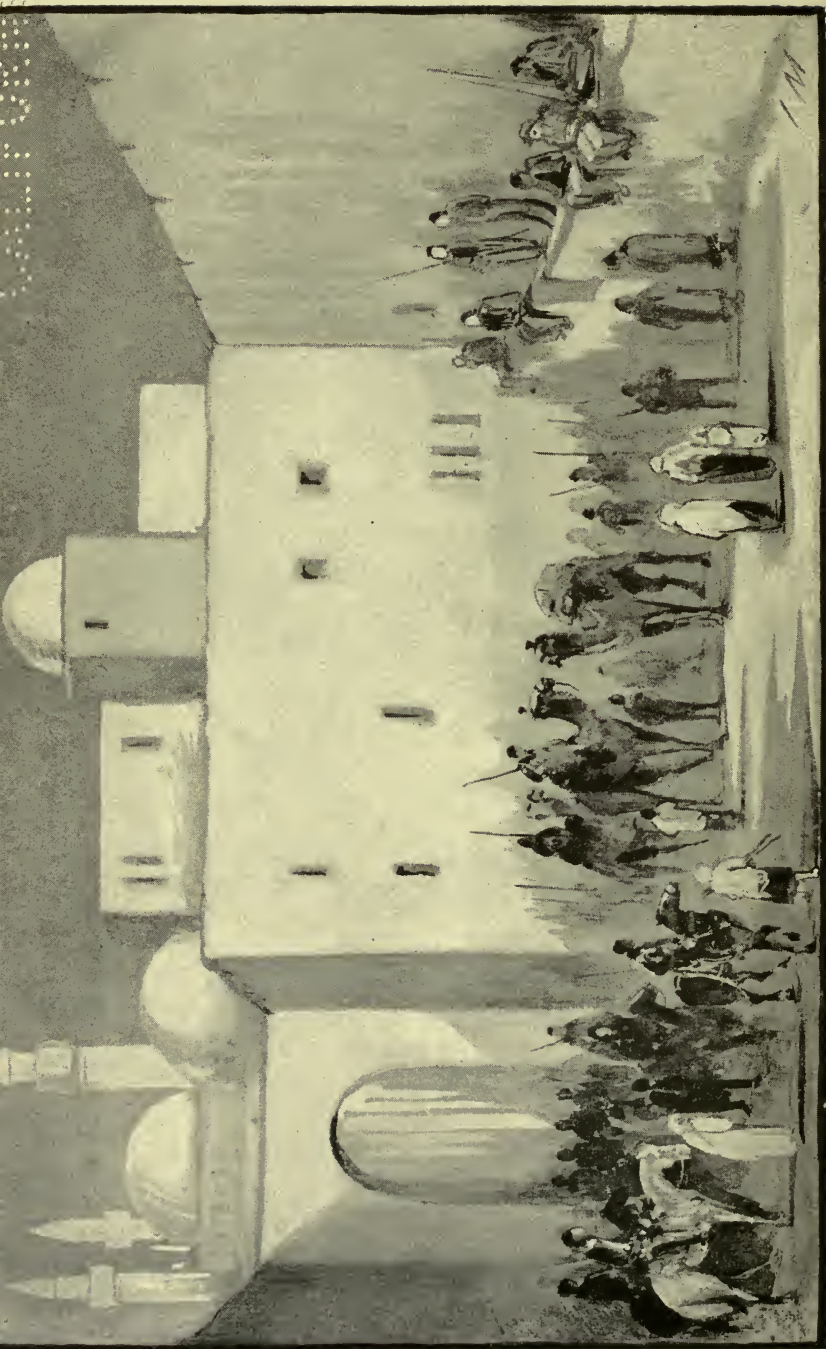
I shall never forget that languid, lacklustre-eyed vulture. There was a sort of fat-boy-in-*Pickwick* peculiarity about that protruding, half-featherless paunch, that feeble tail—those limp wings, so innocent of flutter; there was an appealing look about him, as, with a sort of nervous, I might say drunken, uncertainty, he clung to the offal on which he was perched, his beak still reeking with

the remains of a recent repast. Indeed, when I levelled my revolver at him, there was an eloquence in that orb, dimmed as it was by gluttony, which said plainly as words could ever do :

“If that which you present be food, mock me not by offering it, me ; or, if you would compass my end, then ‘If ’twere done when ’tis done, then ’twere well ’twere done quickly,’ for surely death would be preferable to the indigestion from which I suffer.” Oh, what a lesson to the over indulgent flesh-eater this was !

To return to Erzeroum however. It will be remembered that I mentioned just now the man-eater, and lest it be supposed by the uninitiated that I speak of the tiger (of which there are none in this part of the world), I may explain that I referred to a semi-wild dog, which finds his chief food in the graveyards, from which habit the name originates, the result of the grim courses in which he indulges being, that his hair, especially about his hind quarters, falls off, giving him a horribly hungry cadaverous appearance.

Having wended our tortuous way down several long and dirty streets, we came upon a broader one, in which we were not long in finding the consulate, where, wearied with many days’ rough travel, we at once dismounted and sent in our names to Her Majesty’s Representative. We had been waiting but a short time in the Great Stone Hall, when a sallow, squat, dwarf-like Asiatic, with a scimitar like a huge new moon, suddenly drew aside some heavy draperies, and there before us stood a man of middle height and soldierly bearing, with the kindest of kindly expressions on his handsome sunburnt face.



There was no occasion for Consul Zohrab to give us verbal welcome, for, to paraphrase the old song, "he spoke to us only with his eyes," and I think "we pledged with ours," as we returned his cordial greeting. After the usual salutations, he said "In the first place, follow me. I have one or two old friends to whom I wish to introduce you; the sight of them will, I am sure, be to you almost as refreshing as their more intimate acquaintance; and remember, whilst here, you must look on the Consulate as an oasis in the desert, where all Britishers are heartily welcomed." With this he led us into a small ante-room, where a few bottles of Allsopp were displayed, which our kind host had somehow secured, that we weary sons of Albion might be refreshed thereby after our many long hours of hard dusty riding up country.

One should perhaps not think too much of creature comforts, and there may be those reading this record who might suggest I make too much of small events; let them, however, try living on sour milk and filthy water for a week or ten days, I fancy *then* we might be of the same opinion!

We were next taken by the cavasse—another magnificent combination of velvet, gold lace, and yatagans—to the old consulate, a semi-ruin round the corner, in one of the great bare rooms of which we were thus fortunately afforded quarters. During our short stay nothing was left undone which could be done to put the best possible complexion on affairs. Here we again devoted our time to working up our batches of rough sketches taken by the way, and our MS., respectively to be sent on by the first trusty consular messenger to the coast.

I need hardly say we made the consulate our headquarters, as it was to all British subjects passing through, Sir Arnold Kemball and his staff being at that time of the number. The afternoon of the day of our departure we spent on the Euphrates, where, after indulging in such sport as wild fowl of every imaginable colour and size afforded our guns, we sat down to an *al-fresco* meal, at which Mrs. Zohrab and her charming little daughter Irene presided, and to which we all, including the Consul's two manly boys—who had played the part of mystified princes at Baiburt—did full justice. Memories of this day are to me emphasized by the fact that while seated, Turkish fashion, discussing our supplies, we did so to the accompaniment of shell fire, which re-echoed round the hill-tops far away beyond the Deve-Boyun Pass, in the direction of which we were about to proceed.

* * * * *

It was seven o'clock when the members of our little cavalcade marshalled themselves in front of the Consulate prior to departure. All that was likely to be specially useful to us during the campaign had been carefully stowed into our very capacious saddle bags; a lamb roasted whole—a most exceptional luxury, being amongst other things contributed to our stores by Mrs. Zohrab. The effect which true British hospitality had wrought in a very few days, as far as I was concerned, was truly remarkable. I say British hospitality advisedly, for Consul James Zohrab was a Britisher to the backbone. Having made all arrangements for the transmission to the rear of what despatches (artistic or literary) we were able to send back; we felt as we clattered down that stony street, we were

leaving very old friends indeed, as, with much cordial hand-shaking, we bid them adieu, and their cheery voices resounded with a cordial "God speed," and when we had turned out through the city gates, and crossed one of the drawbridges which span that pestilent girdle by which Erzeroum is surrounded, we still dwelt in fancy on their last farewell.

We now came upon a rocky plain, studded irregularly with huge boulders, which appeared either to have been thrown up by volcanic action, or to have fallen from the precipitous heights of the Deve-Boyun (Camel's Back) range, by which we seemed hemmed in, and through the pass of which we presently had to defile. It was not till we had safely traversed this that we thoroughly realised how cut off we were from every vestige of ordinary civilization by the hundred and thirty miles of rugged, hostile country now before us, and we were thankful indeed, to reach Hassan Kali—a little village at the end of our first stage.

Here, in a miserable khan, we settled ourselves down for the night "to sleep, perchance to dream"—in the uncongenial company of filthy buffaloes, oxen, [sheep, and goats—of the kindly Consul, whose recent [welcome made our present condition all the more unendurable. Suffice it to say, we did sleep, and soundly, too; for the sun rose long before we did, and after a breakfast of the eternal "youart," exceedingly black bread, and bitter coffee, helped a little by supplies from our araba, we prepared to continue our way to the forces of Gahzi Mukhtar Pasha, who was then manœuvring in the direction of Kars.

On, on, on we went, in what to us was a *terra incognita*—a rocky expanse of vast extent, terminating in a faint screen of blue-grey mountains, which seemed to form a barrier in whichever direction we looked ; whilst behind us lay the Camel's Back, the pass between the humps of which, as it were, we had come the previous day.

Gazing thus around at our position we suddenly espied with our field-glasses a horseman, galloping in hot haste towards us. We at once halted, and at the pace he was coming, the distance between us was soon rapidly decreased. He was the bearer of a letter from the Consul, which ran somewhat as follows :

“News has come in since you left, that, owing to a strong suspicion that English officers are directing the operations of the Turkish forces, a reward of 400 roubles has been offered for the head of any *Pith helmet* (another way of saying Englishman) which reconnoitring Cossacks may bring in. So beware of going out of the beaten track of the advancing Turks.” Here was a pleasant prospect with which to start in quest of an army, the landmarks of which were curiously few and far between. However, sending back our thanks to the Consul for his timely warning, we proceeded.

About mid-day we stopped for a siesta under some trees, the shadow cast from these and our araba affording temporary shelter from the intense heat ; a shade which, unhappily, was not to be enjoyed by a ghastly freight of wounded, which, while we rested, passed us. There were, I think, eight long, low-lying Asiatic waggons in all, drawn by oxen and driven by semi-savage Kurds, who, with spiked poles in their hands, walked by their sides

and goaded them on. The poor unfortunate sufferers themselves seemed to be so fearfully jumbled together that all chance of living depended on the remaining muscular strength of those who were able to struggle to the surface,



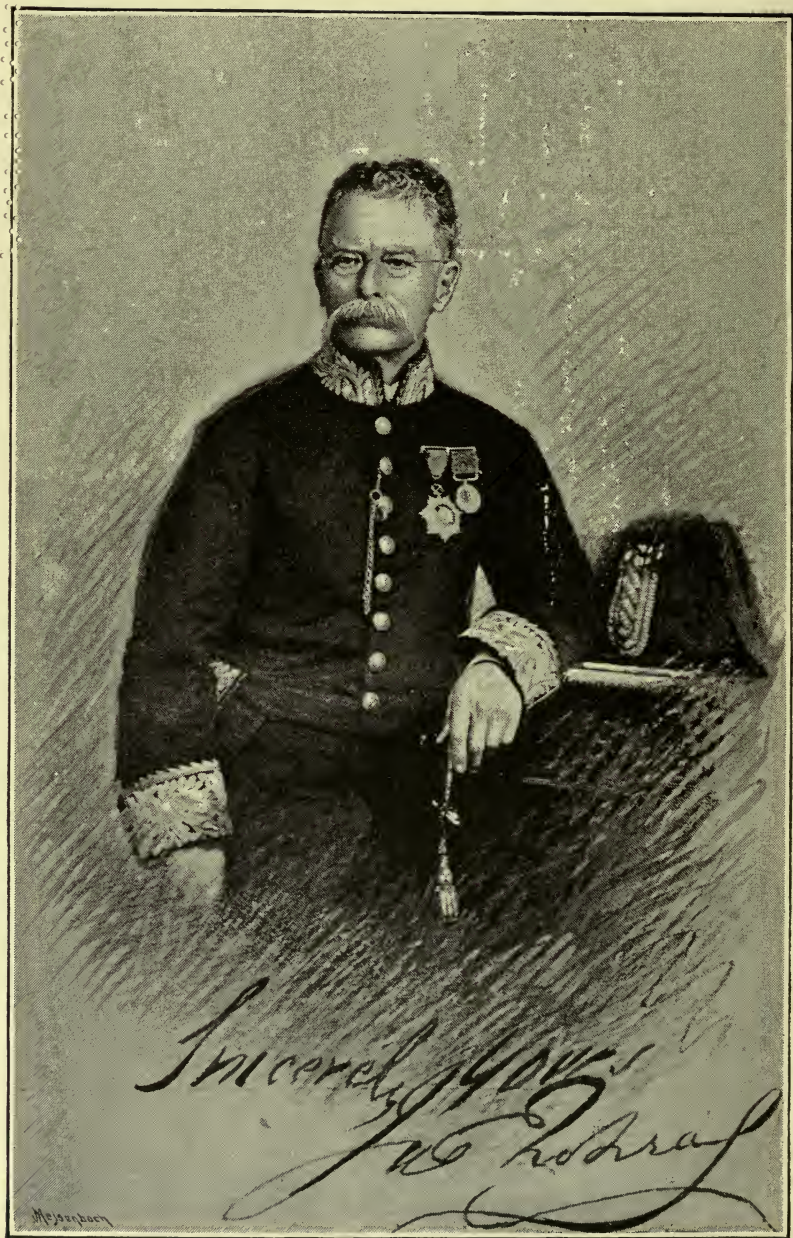
“BAKSHEESH!”

to the cost of the other unhappy wretches beneath them. Indeed, I afterwards heard that a large proportion of the wounded sent to the rear died by the way, being actually smothered; whilst, to give some idea of the utter callous-

ness of these Kurd drivers, I would simply say that when the last of these waggons had passed some little distance from us, one of these poor mangled creatures fell, writhing with pain, with a thud to the ground; and although this was noticed by the driver, he went on as unconcernedly as though a turnip had dropped from a cart laden with vegetables—a life more or less was of no consequence to him—and it was not till I mounted, and galloping after him, threatened him with my revolver, that he took the trouble to lift, with my assistance, the wounded man back into the waggon.

Our rest over, and the hottest part of the day passed, we again proceeded on our way through a country curiously remarkable for the evidences which it bore of having been subjected at some probably very remote period to volcanic action. Silver in many places was commonly found by the natives on the surface, who, provided you gave them a model to work from, would execute the most elaborate designs for you with the rudest instruments, at a price so nominal that it at once suggested what was indeed a fact—that as they carried on all their small transactions by barter, they had little or no use for money, save to adorn the heads of their wives and daughters.

Then, again, coal in one district was so plentiful that we travelled for miles through absolute valleys of it, lying on the surface in huge blocks, where probably it had been for centuries, untouched. The natives knew its qualities well, but would rather far have died outright than have touched what they superstitiously called “The Devil’s fire-stone”—thus actually, in many cases, being starved to



A BRITISH CONSUL.

death with cold while succour was at the very doors of their mud-cabins.

The shades of evening were closing in when one of our number, dismounting, placed his ear to the ground, hoping to thus hear the distant barking of village dogs which might suggest quarters, when he was astonished to hear the distant but distinct galloping as of a horseman in hot haste, which broke the stillness of our surroundings. The Anatolian messenger has the scent of a bloodhound; he very seldom fails to find those in quest of whom he is sent. We were, I remember, not a little anxious, for we could only suppose that this was yet another and more serious message from the Consul to warn us of some later peril which hung over us.

Was the long-continued threat to cut off Mukhtar's base of operations, by blocking the way to the coast, about to be put into force? And should we, when at last on the point of joining the Turkish army, have to retire ignominiously to Erzeroum, there to remain, till further notice, as besieged residents; or, worse still—were the Cossacks actually within touch of us? The very idea made our heads sit uneasily on our shoulders, I can assure you; and so there we stood, till, in breathless haste, his turban tabs fluttering in the wind, and his horse dead-beat, that second Consular messenger reined up and salaamed us.

“Mighty is the great White Pasha of Erzeroum,” said he, having recovered his breath with difficulty, “and mightier is the great Sultana of the country from which he comes; but mightiest is the kotona (wife) of the great Zohrab Pasha—for has she not sent me hither in hot

haste that you may enjoy, with *sweet herbs*, the dead lamb she gave unto thee?"

* * * * *

It was even so. Mrs. Zohrab, who, in her kindest of hearts, had, it will be remembered, given us a roasted lamb, had at parting forgotten its most essential accompaniment, so sent on a special messenger, who reached us on our second day out, with a huge jar of *mint sauce*, which, with salaams innumerable, he now took from the pommel of his saddle, where it had been carefully tied.

It may at first glance seem odd in this relation that, having such a start, we should have been caught up at all; but on remembering that we had, of necessity, to save our horses for the campaign, while he, on the other hand, had only to ride back quietly to Erzeroum, there to rest as long as need be, it will be better understood.

Our next halt was outside a collection of low mud kraals, where, at the entrance of the main street, the headman of the village had stuck defiantly into a huge dung-heap his long black lance, as who should say, with Bombastes—

Who dares this pair of boots displace
Shall meet Bombastes face to face,

substituting only a spear for a pair of boots, and some name far more unpronounceable for that of Bombastes.

As the leader of my little party, it fell to my lot to challenge the village patriarch, which I proceeded to do by striking this lance to the ground, whereupon I was at once accosted by a swarthy, grimy, savage-looking creature, who bowed low in submission before me. Having completed this little ceremony, I was now considered within the village lines, and consequently, as a guest,

demanded every possible hospitality. We were soon surrounded not only by those who were ready to assist us, but by many others whose curiosity was too much for them. Some volunteered to take our horses, and some, not without misgivings on our part, were anxious to look after our more portable etceteras. There is, however, a certain interest about domestic life in the wilds of Anatolia which may not be disposed of too briefly, even though the ordinary khan has, in the earlier part of this chapter, come in for our consideration. I will venture, therefore, to ask my readers to restrain their curiosity till the next chapter, when I hope, in their *goodlie companie*, to spend a night in an odd Asiatic village, before proceeding farther in the direction of the Turkish head-quarters.



CHAPTER III.

“BAIL UP”—CHASED BY BRIGANDS—THE DEVIL’S BOLTS—
WOLVES IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING—THE TEMPLE OF EVIL—
A PASHA OF MANY TALES—A BLOODLESS BATTLE—LITTLE
WORRIES—FIRE WATER—MY REFRACTORY STEED—EXIT
BARKIS—THE DEVIL’S OWN—CELESTIAL ARTILLERY—DEAD
SPIES—“SANS EVERYTHING”—WHITE DEMONS.

THAT there is a certain sense of honour amongst thieves was never more practically illustrated than it was in that brigand village, where, it will be remembered, the Fates had elected we should pass the night, though I must confess to certain seriously grave misgivings, when I discovered we were surrounded by a ruffianly rabble who were all equally solicitous to look after our effects.

Having partaken of bread and salt with their worthy leader, during which time he had arranged that his women-folk should make room for us, we at once proceeded to occupy their khan.

It was a long, low, smoke-begrimed cabin, one portion of which was devoted to goats, sheep, and oxen, while the other, nearest the entrance and by far the most draughty, was dedicated to that other animal—man. We soon had a blazing log-fire burning, and squatted down in most approved Oriental fashion to smoke our pipes round about it,

“for it’s often very cold o’ nights in those parts.” Our peace was soon to be disturbed, however, by what were called the *present-bearers*, five or six dusky warriors, all picturesquely attired, each of whom in turn came forward and presented to us, with lordly air, some insignificant offering which was to be taken as a sign of good will ; thus, I became possessed of a flint-stone, a leaf, a rusty nail or screw (out of an old matchlock, probably), a bead, some grains of sand, and a tent-peg. On receipt of each of these gifts, I had to express my profound gratitude, knowing full well they were only “sprats” to catch mackerel in the shape of *backsheesh* ; a system of fishery as effectually practised in Kensington and Belgravia as in Kurdistan and Anatolia. But to continue.

We had next to submit to an odd sort of confidence trick, which, since Williams had ascertained that we were actually in a real brigand village, that is to say, one in which the majority were “gentlemen of the road,” I was at first very naturally loth to subscribe to.

It appeared customary here for travellers to hand over all the valuables they possessed, that they might be taken from hut to hut for inspection, and their safe return, about an hour afterwards, was to be looked upon as a positive proof of good faith. Thus with so large and unscrupulous a majority, we made a virtue of necessity, turned out our knapsacks and pockets ; surrendered our rings and watches ; in fact, everything portable, save our gold belts and revolvers, even to some loose silver and coppers, which were all promptly carried off by our suspicious-looking entertainers.

On the coast-side of Erzeroum none of these queer cus-

toms existed; but now that we were well up country, every fresh halt brought about a surprise, though even now we smoked our pipes in peace, having grown quite accustomed to look upon the laws of hospitality—held so sacred even by brigands—as a rock to which we might safely cling; and indeed, long before we expected, our belongings were safely returned to us. A necktie of mine,



“MEET ME BY MOONLIGHT ALONE!”

with a steel spring, I heard, created no little commotion, for the *click* with which its patent band closed was so suggestive of a flint-lock pistol, that, fearing it would explode, they averted their heads when testing it.

As the evening wore on, the brigands rode in twos and threes into the village, adding to the number of those who now filled almost every available space in the

khan. Very formidable and effective too they looked, in their dirty, many-coloured costumes: their flowing turbans, curious assortment of inlaid weapons, and gaudy sashes.

The novelty of spending a night with them was not without its charms, knowing, as we did, that, though we were fair game for their powder *outside* the village boundaries, we were now as safe, aye, safer perhaps, than we might have been in many Continental hotels.

Early next morning, having distributed *backsheesh* to the village Elder and his immediate followers, we prepared to depart, and were not a little surprised, as you may imagine, to find the inhabitants of the whole place assembling to bid us an Asiatic *bon voyage*, which they put into practice by what was the nearest approach to kissing the hems of our garments; that is to say, prostrating themselves before us and kissing the tips of our jack-boots. This ceremony over we started riding slowly through the village till we approached the last hut within its boundary, when our guide, whose knowledge of Eastern peculiarities was perfect, halted a moment, shouting as he did so, in the most emphatic voice—

“Now, gentlemen, gallop for dear life. Once out in the open, we belong to the world; we are no longer their guests.”

He was right. No sooner had we put spurs to our horses than they were after us (unmistakable brigands now) in hot haste. They gave chase through a wood and out into an open upland, when we immediately turned on them and showed fight. Seeing that they were out of range, we blazed away with our revolvers

without any scruples as to having their blood upon our heads ; though the Winchester repeaters of our little escort slightly wounded two of their number. Something like a panic ensued ; their fire slackened, and some scuttled back to the village, while the remainder kept up a desultory discharge from their not over accurate flintlocks. Wise in their generation, they were not long in realizing that "the game was not worth the candle" ; and when from the cover of our araba (which we had sent on in advance, and had just come up with) we fired a few farewell shots about their ears, they bolted helter-skelter like rats back into their village.

This argument of theirs is not altogether an unsound one. Having extended their hospitality to us, why should not we afterwards be as much *their* prey and at their mercy as at that of any other band of cut-throats we might meet by the way ?

I give but few descriptions of experiences of this kind, since the many curious encounters we had with brigands ended much in the same manner, although had we not all been well armed, they would doubtless have finished very differently.

Strangely enough, however, we found them later on most useful as messengers. This is how we managed it.

To begin with, we knew that they could get from place to place across those almost untraversed mountains in a marvellous manner, unmolested. Next, we proceeded to show them that the MS. and sketches we gave into their hands to deliver were of no possible value to them. At the same time making them thoroughly understand that, on their returning with a previously arranged



AMONG THE BRIGANDS.

proof to us of their safe delivery at a certain point, they would be amply rewarded ; so they performed the office of parcels post to perfection.

These desperadoes generally attack in the same blood-curdling manner. They draw their ponderous pistols, and with ferocious gesticulations yell and shout what in their language is equivalent to "Your money or your life." The speed with which they make for you, the dead halt to which they bring their little Armenian horses in front of you, and the insolent manner of their demand, are all truly alarming to those inexperienced in their ways. It may therefore be easily understood how a traveller followed by a frightened Zaptiah might, fearing to have his throat cut (a by no means uncommon occurrence), surrender everything ; but since a little defiance goes a long way with these people, especially when backed by revolvers (which they call the "Devil's Bolts"), they are not, as a rule, difficult to repulse.

Perhaps the most dangerous amongst them are those from Baghdad ; but even these on one occasion sheered off without our wasting much powder and shot, on being told by my dragoman that we were only just in advance of the British Army. Your thorough-paced brigands, not having occasion for lies in their ordinary sense, take as a rule all that is told them for granted.

There seems by the way, to me, to be a rather sad reflection in this ; that is to say, that with all his faults, the necessity for lies (if one may so put it) has not occurred to him, and that in this, at least, these semi-savages may set the *civilized* world—where the father of

lies holds his own—an example, for in these wilder parts lies are looked on very much in the light of conundrums.

Again, one day our little party reaching the crest of a hill, suddenly came upon some of these gentlemen of the road, who were hard at work belabouring a traveller, whose horse they had taken possession of, and would, in all probability, have murdered him and made off had we not turned up at the critical moment; the result was they were so scared that they decamped without plunder of any kind, leaving traveller and horse in our hands.

Oh, the gratitude of that man for the deliverance which had come so opportunely; his protestations of devotion, how earnest, how real they were. I remember well how, with innumerable salaams, he begged that, as he was going in the same direction he might enjoy our protection, might serve us, in *any* capacity, no matter how humble, and how each night he repeated those expressions of gratitude before we turned in. He had nothing to give, poor fellow, but this, and with it he overwhelmed us. Morn, noon, and night for three days did he share our frugal repast, and praise Allah and the Prophet seven times every twenty-four hours, that Kismet had so willed it that he should fall in with us.

The fourth morning we missed him. He was nowhere to be found; we grieved for him, naturally, and should have thought he had been spirited away by Houris to some favoured nook in paradise, had we not found that a quantity of our more portable stores were conspicuous by their absence, amongst which were a pair of jack boots, and a silver-mounted Asiatic dagger. Then we sighed sadly for the frailty of poor humanity.

For had we not been the victims of a brigand after all? Nor is subtler brigandage of this kind confined by any means to these parts; schemes broached in confidence, ideas discussed in the inner chamber violated as soon as known by their unscrupulous possessors. How favourably with such wolves in "friends" clothing, such social vampires, will the dirty, begrimed, ill-fed semi-barbaric ruffian compare, who at least hazards his own lean carcase, when in the Georgian, Persian, Circassian, or Kurdish tongue he shouts "Stand and deliver!" To the weak they are terrible, to the well-armed and well-escorted they are not half so dangerous as they look.

One of my men, however, had a narrow escape one day; I sent him on a short *détour* after fodder. Some time having elapsed, we began to feel anxious as to his safety. At length we were relieved by his reappearance; he, poor fellow, having, nevertheless, experienced a queer encounter with four of these miscreants, who, after having taken all he possessed, had thrashed him within an inch of his life, and would have done their work more completely had it not been for the fleet mare he rode.

It is astonishing the dread they have of what they are pleased to term English pashas. Their fame seems to have been sown broadcast in Asia Minor, not only amongst these irreclaimable ruffians, but the peasantry and soldiery; indeed, my own bump of self-esteem was on several occasions considerably swollen when, having ascertained that the correspondent of the *Illustrated London News* was passing through, the troops formed up and saluted as if the great Mukhtar himself had been inspecting them; this, by the way, formed one of the subjects

which I vaingloriously sent back to the *Illustrated London News* during the campaign. Although there is no translating the *Times*, the *Daily News*, or the *Telegraph*, still, with the word "pasha" attached, there is a swing about either of them which commands the respect of the Faithful, for so we must call them, though sometimes their faith is strangely mixed indeed, each district we passed through having views as distinct as its dialect, and peculiarities.

In a vaguely ignorant sort of way the poor bedaubed villagers swore in one place by Allah and the prophets, while in another they would worship the devil and all his works; concluding that since Allah was good he required no propitiating, while his Satanic Majesty should be humoured in every way. Hence the Kizilbashis (I think they called them) had, once a week, a great saturnalia in a sort of mud barn, especially devoted to the purpose—"The Temple of Evil" in fact. Here, when the sun went down, they lit huge flambeaux, which they stuck into convenient corners, while they danced a grotesque whirligig to the accompaniment of their own gruff voices. It certainly looked very diabolical, and, I should say, must have been a compliment, highly gratifying even to so great a connoisseur as the Devil himself. I heard it was customary to sleep off the effects of these orgies *ensemble*, and to begin a new week betimes in the morning.

What the equivalent for alcohol may have been in which these grimy votaries of Bacchus indulged I know not, but certainly its introduction into this saturnalia is the best proof that Mahomet had nothing to do with the foundation of this sect of *very* peculiar people.

Very peculiar people did I say? Well, perhaps, not

very peculiar people after all, if one looks around and notes how many Devil worshippers there are in one's very midst. There is the money-grubbing millionaire, whose devil is Mammon; the hollow-hearted woman of fashion, whose idol is summed up in one word, "society"; the pious fraud, whose own virtues are the self-created god he worships. These, down to the more vulgar, common-place devotees—from the worshipper of that parti-coloured harlequin, *Rouge et noir*, to the spirit of the juniper berry which hovers over the gin palace—each and all are surely in their way equally "Devil worshippers" with these poor benighted wretches, who may sometimes be unearthed when travelling out of the beaten track in Asia Minor.

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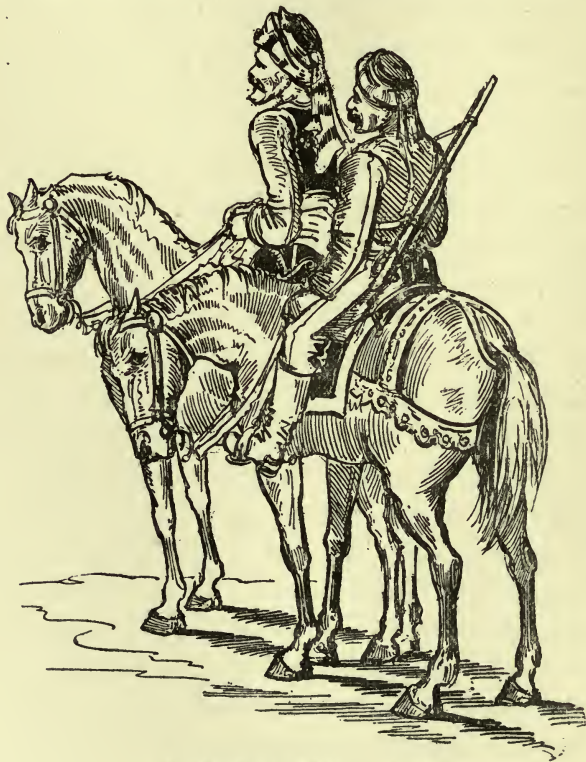
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Early one morning, just when the sun was rising (we were passing through an overhanging gorge) we came upon one who looked, at first glance, what he afterwards turned out to be, a veritable "Pasha of many tales."

Mounted on a grey arab, caparisoned in brilliant velvet trappings, and himself in a costume the glories of which would have opened the eyes of the Good Haroon Alraschid—was a horseman, whose spare, graceful figure did full justice to his garb. A fez, round which a turban of many colours was wound, the ends of which fluttered in the breeze, formed his headgear, while from his side depended a sabre of exquisite workmanship. Besides his immediate attendant he was followed by four or five native lancers, the clattering of whose arms gave a sort of martial music to his whole surroundings. I saluted his mightiness in passing, he giving me a salaam to his very saddle-bow in return.

I noticed when I had ridden on a few paces that he pulled up, and looked round with a merry twinkle in his eye, which seemed curiously to appeal to me.

“Och, now ! and isn’t it Montagu ? And yer don’t know your old friend O’Donovan of the *Daily News*.”



A PASHA OF MANY “TALES.”

It was even so ; for his own wise press purposes, he had so well simulated one of the Faithful, that I think he would have passed muster with Mahomet himself. I had known him in many climes and many uniforms, but the most complete disguise of all was that of



E. O'DONOVAN.

O'Donovan Pasha, than whom a more genial, kindly fellow never lived.

Looking over some old letters the other day, I found one, so characteristic of himself, and in which he so graphically describes the peculiarities of the photograph from which I have taken the portrait that appears in this chapter, that I quote from it the following extract; it was written from Dinard, to which place he had escaped to avoid the lionizing of the London season, and finish "The Merv Oasis." It was the last letter I ever had from my old friend, and ran as follows:—

Accompanying I send you a photograph of myself, taken here, at Dinard. You will possibly recognise the old Ulster overcoat which I wore when you took me for a pasha or brigand—which was it?—on the road between Erzeroum and Hassan Kalé. The fox-skin collar and cuffs were put on during the investment of Kars. The cap is Cossack. The sabre is historic, it is a remnant of the unfortunate expedition to Cabul of 1840; it was captured by the Afghans in the Khyber Pass, the English hilt and mountings removed and substituted by Afghan ones. It was subsequently taken by the Turcomans in a border skirmish and handed to me by the latter on the occasion of my being inaugurated at Merv as Bahadoor Khan. This is the sixteenth year that I own the Ulster overcoat. It has seen the Spanish (Carlist), Herzegovinian, Albanian, Danubian, Armenian, and Transcaspian campaigns, and yet remains to the fore. Perhaps it might suit you to design from the photograph a sketch for some of the illustrated papers, appending some fancy name, such as, for instance, "Literæ et arma," "A special correspondent," "A literary brigand," or "The devil take the hindmost." Any other title that may come to your mind will probably suit—as well as the old Connemara coat suits me. *Diga mil cosas de mi parte á la Señora.*

And believe me to be,

Dear Montagu,

Very sincerely yours,

E. O'DONOVAN.

Our course now lay in the direction of Zevin, a point destined within a few hours to become a decisive check on the manœuvres of the Russians to outflank the Osmanli. While on the one hand the Muscovites had been weakened

by having sent troops to suppress the insurrection in the Caucasus, Mukhtar Pasha was getting the long expected reinforcements, supplies and ammunition, sent *viâ* Trebizond and Erzeroum to head-quarters. On the 21st of June he collected his forces, and defeated Tergukasoff, who retired to Zeidekan ; but it was not till the 25th that the greatest disaster befel the Russian army; almost within touch of which we were.

In the last few days the excitement had been rapidly rising to fever heat, troop after troop of Circassians



CIRCASSIAN CAVALRY.

defiling past us as we hurried forward. Half-bandit, half-soldier, and generally of broad proportions, the Circassian, in his long, tight-fitting coat and fur cap—his breast ablaze with glittering cartridge-cases—his long gun—and his formidable-looking scimitar, is a fine type of the dashing irregular ; while the Kurd, with his crocodile eye—his pudding face—demoniacal expression—and long

tufted lance raised high in air, holds his own for preternatural ferocity.

From one quarter came Krupp guns and ammunition, from another supplies of every description, the hills around seeming alive with those long-expected troops and stores, which had come so opportunely.

Faizi Pasha, as he was called (a Hungarian by birth), was in command when the Russians attacked at early dawn, under Melikoff, the splendid position he had succeeded in occupying at Zevin. Cheered by their recent success, the Turks fought like tigers; nor did the Russians yield an inch till after a long-contested battle they were forced to retire all along the line, in the best order they could after so crushing a reverse. So great, indeed, were the Russian losses that the Turks were able to advance *en masse*.

The fighting of the irregulars on both sides was brilliant, though the Kurds and Circassians lacked that discipline which placed the Cossacks far in advance of them as fighting men.

The Circassian, by the way, be he ever so bloodthirsty, has a marvellously fanatical respect for the life of one of his own race. For instance, a conflict, which formed in itself an interesting episode, terminated most curiously between two large bodies of these free lances, during this same fight at Zevin, and showed how staunchly they kept to their vows. They were respectively on the Russian and Turkish sides, *vis-à-vis*, and, to all appearance, a desperate conflict continued for some hours; but, oddly enough, at the end of the engagement, they were very much in the same condition as the troops of

the late lamented Duke of York, who, it will be remembered, "Marched 'em up a hill, and marched 'em down again." An actually bloodless battle raged for some time, for, when each side retired, it was discovered that, by mutual consent, no serious blows had been struck. It was astonishing, too, how many shells seemed to have fallen unexploded during that engagement from the Russian guns. Something wrong with the percussions probably.

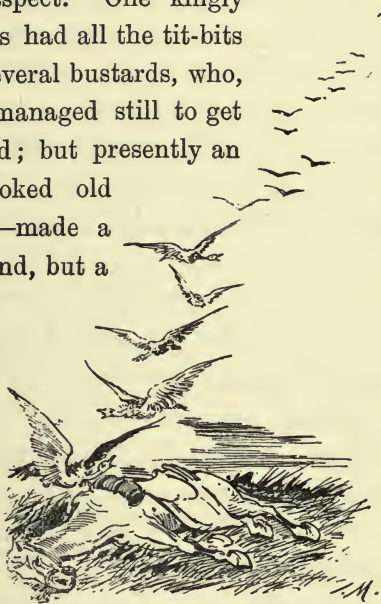
While depicting the grim horrors of the field of Zevin, it struck me, that one of these same shells might be an interesting souvenir, and I picked one up with a view to having it stowed away under safe cover in our araba, but, on second thoughts, I carefully put it down again, feeling that my insurance would be in jeopardy were it generally known to hold a place amongst other curiosities on the sideboard of my cottage at Hampstead.

Just as shells are suggestive of eggs, so are eggs naturally suggestive of birds; and this brings me to the marvellous number and variety of wild birds in Asia Minor, all then growing plump and sleek on the sorrows of others. I counted that evening one splendid flight of nineteen vultures, coming in Indian file, slowly and surely, down upon the now quiet battle-field as twilight thickened. They were of the bald-headed species; one could almost have supposed them to be the spirits of the departed enemy come back again, still eager for the fray, for they seemed to wheel in something like military order, till they saw a fitting point at which to demolish the ranks of the silent dead, who, heaped in confused masses, stood out black against the sunset.

Then from north, south, east, and west, I watched others

come to dispute with these their mutual heritage—not by any means all vultures. Bustards and hawks must have their appetites appeased, and even the carrion crow, and smaller birds innumerable. Each and all must hold their own in fighting for corruption.

I saw one inheritance, in the shape of a dead horse, curiously contested, the gay trappings of which seemed a mockery to its ghastly aspect. One kingly vulture for some moments had all the tit-bits to himself; then came several bustards, who, not venturing too near, managed still to get several snacks unmolested; but presently an impudent crow—who looked old enough to know better—made a feeble effort to peck around, but a look from that vulture scared him, and off he flew disconcerted, without his supper. Now—would you believe it?—he presently returned with a whole army of little black friends, who, by their fluttering and noise, so agitated that elderly gourmand with the frill, and those other more modest diners-out, the bustards, that they presently flew off to feed elsewhere, leaving the impudent crow and his comrades to feast by themselves.



INDIAN FILE.

Surely these chattering, fluttering carrion crows came like "little worries," to which the vulture in all his glory

was unequal ; that bird, I take it, comparing fitly with that other (cultured) biped—man. The vulture may meet his fellows in fair fight all round ; he may even extend his royal clemency to the meek, humble bustard ; but, in the end, what *can* he do but submit to the impudent onslaughts of that common-place, tantalising, diminutive crow ? And is it not so with men, to whose perceptive minds and creative powers we are indebted for the development of modern civilization, who have been at supreme moments before now, unhinged by an absent button or perverse pin ; who, capable as they may be of the highest aims and ends, are still unequal to life's tiniest trials, which, at certain epochs in the world's history, have dethroned monarchs and swayed the destinies of nations ? Yes ; there is more than at first glance one may suppose in " little worries."

Then, as it grew darker, sneaking up from all quarters came wolves and other scavengers, to batten, gorge, and ruminate on the barbarous work of intellectual man.

Having thus moralized on the scene before me, I suddenly became conscious that night was fast closing in, so hastened away in quest of more congenial quarters.

* * * *

" Poor fellow ! he 's dying," said Johannes, as, having proceeded some distance, we passed a party of Circassians and Kurds by the roadside, tending a wounded comrade.

I at once got off my horse, and, unhooking my brandy-flask, administered a dose of the reviving fluid, forgetting that Mahomet was a total abstainer, and that partaking of fire-water meant expulsion from Paradise. Happily the nature of the dose was not discovered till we had gone some distance, when, pell-mell, in hot haste, they

came galloping after us, flourishing their weapons and vowing immediate vengeance.

It was, I need hardly say, a critical moment. We at once halted, and determined to sell our lives through the medium of our revolvers; but, fortunately, Williams again came to the fore with his ready wit and saved us. He took upon himself to ride up and interview our pursuers, though listen at first they would not.

No: "The Effendi had killed their comrade; he was stark dead by the road side; he had poisoned him with the fire-water of the infidel, and they had come to claim *his* life." Oh! for the magic carpet of Arabian reputation, that we might at that moment hide ourselves

Anywhere, anywhere out of the——

reach of those avengers.

At their advance towards us, Williams gave a loud hollow laugh which made them involuntarily recoil—were they talking to the evil one himself? He saw the effect and continued—

"Why, good Moslems, you have forgotten one thing? How long after taking the dose, which you in your ignorance call fire-water, did your brother live?"

"Several minutes," said one.

"Ah! I thought so; it was that wondrous drug which kept him for those few minutes more amongst you, before he joined the Houris. The pasha is a great medicine man who comes to the battle-field to save life—not to take it."

The effect was perfectly marvellous, and not a little ludicrous too, for, leaping from their horses, they proceeded to prostrate themselves round about my feet, and

to implore me to cure them of their many ills, which I immediately endeavoured to do, by administering to each several powerful pills; and as, sad but satisfied, that little group wheeled about, Williams—his underlying mirth



“POOR BARKIS!”

coming out in a sly smile at the corners of his mouth, said, slowly and half meditatively to himself—

“Ah! just so; *very* strong aperients—three each, too—no—oh, dear no—we shall be in Kars long, *long* before those gentlemen are disposed again to do anything in particular—especially to follow us.”

That night we slept soundly on the hill side without further adventure; our stores, however, had for some time begun to show signs of rapid decrease, and, as native diet began to take their place in increasing quantities, we all grew proportionately unequal to the immense mental as well as the great physical strain which campaigning under such circumstances necessitates. However, we held on, for we had yet to make the headquarters of Mukhtar, and go thence to Kars.

A few words here concerning Barkis—the horse I chiefly rode whilst in Asia Minor—might be interesting,



“INCOMPATIBILITY OF TEMPER.”

and to which we gave this odd cognomen, for the absurd reason that he was the most utterly *unwilling* beast I ever possessed; yet he was not churlish by any means, his sense of the ridiculous being beyond question. Let me, from his many curious antics, quote three, which took place within a short time of each other.

One day I lent him to the correspondent of the *Scotsman*, while I, for change sake, rode his horse. It happened on that day that we had to wade across a stream which came nearly to our horses' girths. Whether his

sentiments were Conservative or not, I cannot say, but something had hurt his feelings—probably he objected to his new rider—for when in the middle of that stream Barkis suddenly rolled over, leaving the *Scotsman* floundering helplessly midway, in the most undignified manner imaginable, while he, after having had a pleasant dip and another refreshing roll, made for the opposite shore.

On another occasion, while being shod in an Anatolian smithy, a process at which Johannes was assisting, he suddenly became so terribly refractory that his legs had to be tied and he thrown on his side before the work of shoeing could be effected. But Barkis was not to be so easily defeated. Kicking with much determination, he broke the cord by which he was fastened, and at the same time, in some miraculous way, struck one of the flintlock pistols Johannes carried in his belt, in such a manner too that it immediately exploded, the bullet curiously enough penetrating the door-post of the smith's cabin, against which I and another correspondent were leaning, luckily a few inches away from that particular spot.

Once again did the indefatigable *Scotsman*, anxious not to be outwitted by a “puir beastie,” mount him. It was evening; we were approaching the Turkish lines. To do this we had to cross a river, which was at this time much swollen by recent rains, so much so, that a temporary bridge of rough pines had been thrown across it. Our little cavalcade had all gone over except our friend the *Scotsman*. Perhaps the strain to that point had been as much as the bridge could bear; I cannot say; I only know that we suddenly heard a loud crash, and on looking round saw Barkis below and the *Scotsman* above, sitting

there in an attitude which, to say the least of it, was more comic than comfortable, and with a curious expression of surprise on his pallid countenance.

The fact of the matter was this: Barkis had sunk straight through the impromptu bridge, of which (being of fairly broad proportions) enough was still left intact to accommodate the rider, who this time had the best of it, as he sat there gazing down through the gap which the descending Barkis had made, with a look of indescribable surprise and feelings of wonder not unmixed with pity. Luckily, the depth was not very considerable; and though



PENDING DIVORCE.

the poor beast at first found it difficult to recover himself, our united efforts at length succeeded in getting him out of the muddy sluggish stream, but it was not without the greatest difficulty that we got him to the camp, where we very soon discovered he was utterly done for.

Poor Barkis! his little life of wild adventure was over; several had suffered by his pranks; indeed almost all, save myself, and now it seemed sad, even with all the

hardening influences around us, to think how soon he would be playing his last *rôle* in connection with war, that of contributing his tough proportions to the commissariat.

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At last, we were in the camp of Mukhtar Pasha.

That night we slept in a Circassian village, at the base of the hill occupied by the tents of the Osmanli; and while our quarters were being made ready, we were received most hospitably in his tent by that kindest and bravest of soldiers, Sir Arnold Kemball.

There was something delightfully refreshing, after our rough-and-tumble experiences, since we dined together in comparative luxury in Erzeroum, to meet Sir Arnold again, to hear of a marvellous escape he had had of being run to earth by the enemy: the Cossacks all but succeeding in scoring *two* pith helmets (for Captain Norman was with him), and getting probably those much coveted roubles.

It was late when Williams rode up to say that our baggage was deposited in safety, and that the khan was ready for us.

On reaching it we found a curious audience had arrived there before us, for some eighteen or twenty Circassians were sitting in solemn silence in a semi-circle awaiting us. These were the exhibitors, waiting, as usual, to take round our goods and chattels. Here again we had to go through the bread and salt process before we were allowed to settle down quietly to black coffee and pipes. At stated intervals, out of compliment to us, and to break the monotony of being unable to converse with us, a Circassian would drawl out a sort of

recitation in a wheezy voice, which no doubt told of love and romance most touchingly to those who understood him; then another, who prided himself on being a storyteller, would describe his marvellous adventures in some land he had probably only dreamt of; at last, feeling somewhat under an obligation to them, we devised a very simple conjuring trick for their benefit.

Theatrical asides were unnecessary; we could arrange preliminaries in as loud a key as we chose without fear of detection. Not one amongst us had the slightest notion how to conjure in the proper sense of the word; however, something had to be done.

"Take a cartridge," said Holmes; "yours are the same number as mine. I will do the same. Put yours into your mouth and pretend to swallow it. The next moment I will appear to take it out of the heel of your boot."

Having successfully performed the trick, we paused for well-merited applause; imagine our consternation—they rose to a man, drew their long Circassian knives and, rushing towards us like so many frenzied devils, declared we were in league with Satan, whose name, yelled by a score of hoarse voices, was the only audible sound for some minutes.

All was confusion and commotion; and it was a considerable time before even Williams, with his ready wit and presence of mind, could make them understand what a conjuring trick was. At length our hearts took their places again, having, figuratively speaking, been in our mouths from the moment our mild efforts at legerdemain brought about this dangerous episode.

The next morning we were presented to the General,

Ahmet Mukhtar, who was seated on the edge of a low truckle bed in his plain bell tent—its only difference from an ordinary one being, perhaps, that it was rather larger. His sword hung to the tent pole. No adornment of any kind was visible, Eastern or otherwise, to enliven the temporary home of the great commander.

There he sat, as simple as his surroundings, a close-fitting military frock-coat, with an ordinary fez worn much on the back of the head, completing his war-paint. He wore no decorations.

When he received myself and the other correspondents who were presented to him, he did so with marked courtesy and almost French politeness; coffee was ordered, of which we all partook, and, through the medium of an interpreter, he expressed the pleasure it gave him to receive us in his camp, with the hope that those who could would have tents near his own, and curiously enough it so happened that mine was for some days the very next one to that of Mukhtar Pasha's, who regularly every morning invited me to partake of coffee with him.

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It was night. We were aroused by a terrible tempest, and, as the camp was pitched on the side of a very steep hill, its whole force was felt. Never, before or since, have I heard such thunder, or seen such lightning. One moment the whole field of vision, as far as the eye could reach, was lit up, dotted with thousands of white tents brought out in bold relief as each electric flash succeeded its fellow, and then, the next instant, all was lost in a darkness so comparatively black that it was

actually appalling. The hail and rain, coming down in torrents, filled our tents and trenches in no time, till the culminating point was reached in a fearful tempest of wind and sleet, which swooped down upon us like a veritable whirlwind.

In less time than it takes to describe, we poor unfortunates found ourselves clinging to our tent-pole like grim death, while the tent itself being lifted on the wings of the wind, was literally turned inside out; our sketches and MS. dispersed beyond reclaim, and ourselves drenched to the skin. The storm having somewhat abated, we groped our way to the village khan, where Johannes, the arabaji, and the Zaptiahs were. Our first thought was to go and see Barkis, who for several days had been, owing to his fall, *in extremis*. We found him, to our mutual grief, on his side—stiff, cold, and dead.

Alas! poor Barkis. “Where be your jibes now?”

Somehow the very skittishness of my old favourite had special charms for me. His eccentricities were so original; he had won a reputation peculiarly his own—he had struck out a path for himself, “the path of glory, which leads but to the grave.” His death placed me in a terribly awkward predicament. It was utterly impossible, for love or money, to procure another horse; so I was constrained to continue the journey to Kars on foot through alternate swamp and upland, no small undertaking under an almost tropical sun, for one who had already suffered sunstroke, and on whom scant food and fatigue were beginning to tell terribly. A change of direction of the army, one portion of which went to the reinforcement of Kars, necessitated

our starting that morning by a slightly different route for the same destination.

We at first for some considerable time travelled through a thickly wooded district, after which we reached an open



THE FATE OF SPIES.

plateau, across which we had gone but a short distance when we came upon the naked bodies of two notorious Russian spies, who, caught in the act, had been done to

death, and left to swell, blister, and putrefy in the burning sun. They presented a most ghastly, even odd appearance, being tattooed from head to foot with innumerable thrusts from the spears of the most disreputable of free-lances who, though probably thieves and murderers, were yet, in their own estimation, a considerable cut above spies. The term "odd" seems strangely out of place, yet there were instances innumerable in which bodies were found in most grotesque attitudes. I may here quote one.

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A Russian and a Turk coming unexpectedly to close quarters, while reconnoitring not far from Mukhtar's camp, engaged in deadly contest; they received bayonet thrusts simultaneously, their legs becoming as it were trestles to a bar formed by their two rifles, the bayonets of which were thrust deeply each into the other's breast. It was for some days a common thing to go and see these two dead soldiers, who, for some considerable time, stood thus transfixed in that last and equally fatal effort.

To return to our narrative, however. We had not left those dead spies far behind us, when we found we had to cross a vast swamp which nearly brought us to a standstill altogether, since in some cases our horses sank so deeply into the mire, made doubly tenacious by the storm of the night before, that we felt to get through to higher ground would be impossible. This of course, since Barkis was *non est*, specially applied to myself.

While in this hopeless plight we were observed by some Circassians, who were skirmishing in higher and drier

latitudes at no great distance ; our helplessness was a signal for playfulness on their part which we at the time somehow failed to enter into. They commenced a sharp and deliberate fire upon us, with their long formidable-looking guns, which, thanks to their being exceedingly bad marksmen, did no harm. So we were pleased to take the will for the deed, and return their fire with the "Winchesters" of our guards and our own revolvers. Eventually, however, we succeeded in obliging them to sheer off ; the unpleasant ping of those bullets which nearly found their "billets" now becoming few and far between.

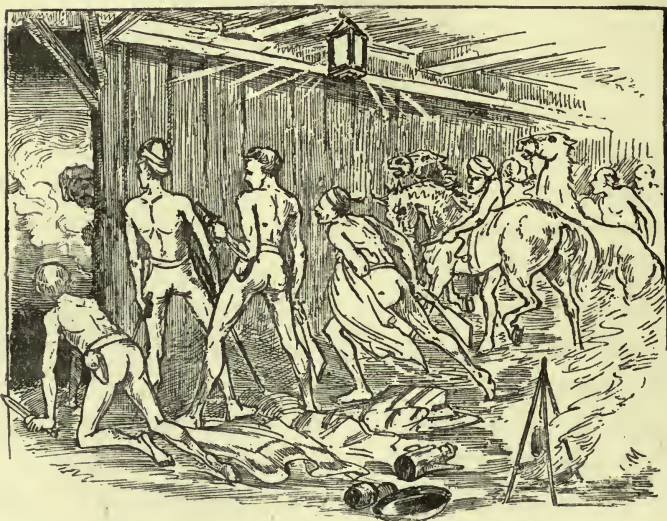
Once again on *terra firma*, I was obliged from time to time to avail myself of my companions' horses, as we continued our way, only to be caught, however, in a repetition of last night's storm. We were drenched to the skin ; besides, the day was already waning, and it would be some time before we reached a village where we could put up for the night. We were, indeed, wretched examples of humanity ; for, of late, we had been ill-fed and suffered terribly from the severity of the climate and long forced marches, for which our short rest in camp had not compensated. And the soakings we had just had—though they didn't damp our ardour, helped the other depressing influences to assert themselves more thoroughly. Horseless myself, I could not fall back on any of my troop, for your native Anatolian out of the saddle to which, as a rule, he has been accustomed from his youth up, is a poor creature indeed, and would certainly have been invalidated before we had proceeded much farther had we changed places.

Before sundown that night we were fortunate enough to find a halting place, a mountain village, outside which on entering we noticed an encampment of Kurds, whose grimy tents and long black tufted lances looked strangely barbaric and weird in the twilight. The only available khan in the place we found to be a small one, from which our saturated clothes, had they been dried there, must have steamed us out. Worse still, we had no change with us, our araba, under better protection, having gone on by the other route, to await our arrival at Kars; so we determined on having a blazing fire made, borrowing such coverings as were available in that poverty-stricken village, while we divested ourselves of *everything*, save our money belts and revolvers, our clothes being sent to a neighbouring hut to be dried.

This being done, we settled down in our unaccommodating wraps to chat over our pipes, before, worn out with the day's work, we should fall into the arms of Morpheus.

Picture us, therefore, if you can, scantily costumed in revolver and money belt, yet plentifully supplied with Eastern draperies wherewith to wrap ourselves, seated round that khan fire, more like savages than correspondents: a condition of affairs more picturesque than pleasant I can assure you, since, amongst other minor discomforts, we were nearly stifled by the smoke, the only exit for which was through a rude hole in the roof, an Asiatic substitute for the chimney of civilisation. It was not long, however, notwithstanding all this, before Nature asserted herself, and we were every one of us fast asleep.

Now, what particular time in the small hours it happened to be I'm not prepared to say, but long after the little village had been wrapped in silence there came a shriek, the horror-stricken sound of which we shall none of us ever forget. Being thus suddenly awakened, all eyes were turned towards the spot from whence the hideous screech had come. Through the aperture in the roof of the hut now came, looking doubly horrible in the



WHITE PASHAS.

fitful firelight, a panic-stricken native's head. From a few words hurriedly shouted, or rather yelled, by the unexpected visitor above, Williams grasped the fact that the Kurds were making a raid on the village; indeed, this was sufficiently evident from the firing which had already commenced, and the hurrying and rushing hither and thither of the scared and startled villagers without. Our

first idea was the safety of our horses, and in our anxiety to protect these, which were at the farther end of the hut, we forgot all else, even our Eastern adornments, rushing in hot haste to the entry (there being no proper door) to defend them. The rugs, in our excitement, had naturally been left behind, nor could we have kept them well round us had we tried, and so it was that in a state of nudity (save for our money belts) we rushed out, revolver in hand, to protect the interests most dear to us.

It was a wild sight, in the light of the waning moon, to see those diabolical free-lances charging the villagers, who, to do them justice, fought well; our scattered revolver fire was of some service too. One thing is certain: to those savages, superstitious to a degree, it was our appearance which caused the greatest alarm, for the presence in their midst of a force of specials, so completely divested of their war paint, had an effect on them which a whole arsenal of small-arms would have failed to produce. To them we were suddenly invested with all the advantages of evil eyes, and looked on as uncanny creatures—white fiends, in fact, on whom those fitful rays of moonlight must have fallen with dramatic effect, for directly we showed ourselves outside the khan those Kurds recoiled before us as if we had been veritable imps of darkness. Giving us thus a very wide berth, they made tracks for another part of the village, shouting as they did so in Kurdish: “See, see! The White Devils are out! The White Devils are out!”

The skirmish was short and desperate. Seven women were carried off, many of the villagers were wounded, and

two or three killed, before they rode away with their human plunder; and when at daylight, two hours later, we obtained our clothes, which fortunately had been in one of the very few huts they had not entered, we saw no signs of the Kurdish camp of the night before; and I think when those desperadoes become octogenarians they will tell their great-grandchildren, round the camp fire, how, long years ago, they came face to face with "The White Demons."



CHAPTER IV.

THE COSSACKS! THE COSSACKS! — BRITISH PLUCK — WITH
 MUKHTAR PASHA—NOT DEAD YET—KARS—A BRIGHT-EYED
 AMAZON — HAIRY MOSES — FAVOURITES OF FATE — THE
 GENTLEST OF HER SEX — MUKHTAR'S RETREAT — AN
 UNCLEAN ARMY—MADDENING TITILLATION—A DESERTED
 VILLAGE—FAMISHING—UTTERLY AT SEA.

THE first streak of dawn! To what strange sentiments,
 all over the civilized and uncivilized world, is the first
 streak of dawn parent. The mother at the bedside of her
 sick child, the wife by that of her husband, with what
 anxiety do they hail the approach of yet another day!
 That grim, black, forbidding banshee Night, trailing
 behind her sable draperies as she goes, seems scared by
 the approach of her fairer sister; it is a moment when
 many wake to renewed hope, some to the crushing con-
 viction of those horrors which they only half realized in
 those long drawn-out hours of night preceding its advent.
 The same slowly increasing light

Struggling still with the sable shroud,
 Revealing in grim array
 The terrors which night has striven to steal
 From the sorrows of yesterday.

It finds its way through the chinks in the shutters, and
 combats that of the glittering candelabras which light

up the haggard, careworn faces of gamblers and *roués*. It comes alike to the potentate in his palace and the prisoner in his cell, reminding each of the fetters which bind him, be they State troubles or hand-cuffs. It comes to the young and innocent laden with the sweet aroma of opening flowers, to the old and weary with a panorama of broken promises and crushed hopes, night to them being almost preferable to the terrible awakening.

So it was as the first streak of dawn fell athwart those mud kraals, and cast its long grey shadows over their dark entrances, where, hugging their little ones close to them, crooning a wild native dirge the while, those poor Anatolians bewailed the fate of their children who had been ruthlessly taken from them, even more than that of those who lay dead at their feet.

With us, however, it was to be a great day, since that night we hoped to be in Kars. Rest was now impossible, so we hastened to get our troop in marching order, and it was not long before we were clear of that little nest of violated homes. A heavy fog hung over the highlands, by which we seemed blocked in, yet we pushed forward as best we could across the trackless plain which, with the aid of a compass, we thought we had discovered to be our route.

Before we had gone far, we were met by some eight or ten Turkish scouts who, galloping in our direction, presently dashed past us, shouting as they did so at the top of their voices—

“ The Cossacks ! The Cossacks ! ”

The next moment they were lost in the dense mist from which they had emerged.

There was an electricity in the words, which conveyed to us simultaneously (forewarned as we had been) the same all too vivid picture of headless Britishers and Russian roubles.

At such a moment that everyone should be for himself is but human. Being horseless, as will be remembered, I alone had nothing left me but to await the issues of fate. Had running away represented anything, there was no cover. I was alone; all had galloped off, in wild flight, for dear life.

The fearful sensations I experienced in that short period are too terrible for description; a panorama of the whole of my past life flashed vividly through my brain. I was so awe-struck, that I do not think I actually realized my terrible position, and the grim prospect which was awaiting me.

A moment later I was brought back to myself however, for, through the mist on the horizon there appeared a moving mass of cavalry converging towards me. I had but few moments left to me now. Would my utter helplessness appeal to their humanity, if they had any? The humanity of a Cossack! No! There was no consolation there. Each moment, death drew nearer. Then suddenly an unworthy alternative presented itself; I mechanically drew my revolver.

Why should these assassins score? If I must die, why be butchered? Far better take one's own life than——

The rapid thud of horses' hoofs coming that instant from the opposite direction caused me providentially to turn, diverting my intention and attention at the same

moment. I was petrified with astonishment—for there, back “into the jaws of death,” came the *Manchester Guardian* and *Scotsman*. No; they were capable of many things, but they could not leave a Britisher alone.

We were all three now prepared for the worst. A few seconds more, and they swept like an avalanche down that incline. They were upon us!

What happened next, eh?

Ah, just so! Why—nothing at all!

They were a troop of Circassians; it was a false scare. In the fog of early morning those Turkish scouts had mistaken them for Cossacks, but, happily for us, they turned out to be some of Schamyl’s light horse reconnoitring. We were safe.

Our escort, naturally, were nowhere to be seen; they had been utterly scared. Some time afterwards, however, we came upon them, and again journeyed on the road together.

No horse being equal to more than one rider, they were, I take it, quite justified in pursuing the course they did; their presence could have availed me nothing, and must certainly have cost them their own lives had we fallen into the hands of the Cossacks. Nor do I say this without thorough appreciation of the cool courage which, when comparatively out of danger, suggested the return of those two Britishers.

I think that was the longest day I ever remember. For miles I dragged along, supported first on the arm of one and then another, almost fainting with exhaustion; unable now even to sit the horse from which Holmes had dis-

mounted, and implored me to ride; and so again and again we rested, only to renew the journey with greater effort. The distant goal was now actually in sight, but like an *ignis fatuus*, no appreciable difference seemed to be made in the wide stretch between it and us. There in the far distance stood the great impregnable fortress, its guns belching forth grim messages to the Muscovites, while the smoke from its embrasures floated off lazily to the still horizon, and dome and minaret rose in snowy whiteness against the clear, cloudless azure of that Eastern sky. Again, like monster snowballs at intervals on high came time shells, bursting into feathery film ere they descended, projectiles of which one might well say distance lent enchantment to the view.

Curiously contradictory were my feelings at this moment. Yonder was the haven of rest I was seeking. There was the shelter I strove for; just the very spot, the very corner of the earth, where, at this particular time, neither shelter, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, nor rest were to be found.

Many hours had now elapsed since the previous morning we had left in advance of Mukhtar's army, hoping to gain the Karschchai. It was on the advice of Williams we did this, which, invaluable otherwise throughout, failed in this particular. During the whole of this time we had not had more than three hours sleep, the rest of the time being occupied with temporary halts and terribly weary tramps over the roughest country imaginable.

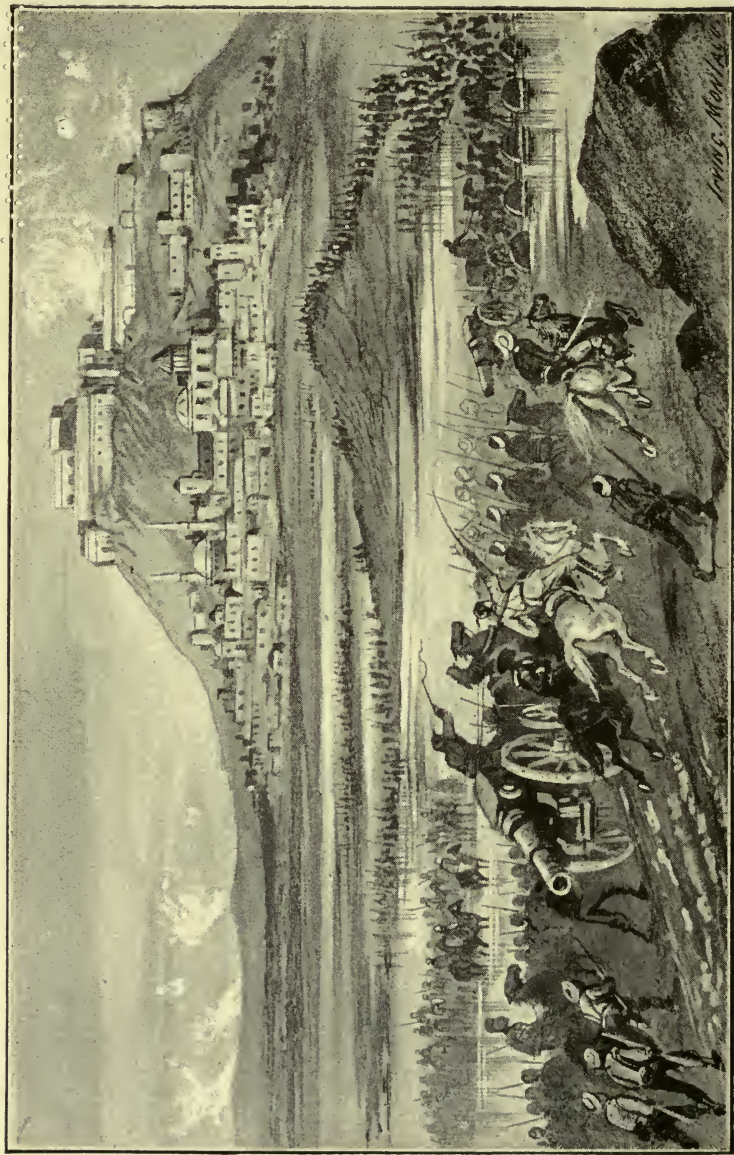
Though it would have availed nothing to speak of it, I could feel that my strength was rapidly ebbing, my slower pace telling naturally to a great extent on the pro-

gress of the others. I was now almost unable to drag one foot beyond the other, and nothing save the kindly solicitude of the rest would have enabled me to hold on.

Once more the evening was closing in, bringing with it fresh difficulties, for we found we had altogether lost our reckoning. We were traversing a forest, and the night being intensely dark we became more and more hopelessly lost in its now black and tangled meshes; so much so, that at last, thoroughly worn out and exhausted, we threw down our wraps, such as they were, and quite regardless of dangerous reptiles or other denizens of the woods, soon fell into a heavy sleep, from which we did not wake till the sun was again high up above the eastern horizon.

Having partaken of what scant food we carried (for our araba, it will be remembered, had been sent on to Kars by another route), we again continued our way, but it was not till long after the ordinary hour of siesta that we emerged from the wood. Kars, owing to our position and the ruggedness of the country, was for a considerable time lost to view, the distant sound of cannonading only being heard. Anon, like some enchanted city of the *Arabian Nights*, did it rise yet a little closer and clearer before us. At length, leaving higher altitudes, we descended into the vast plain through which the Karschchai wound its serpentine course; and here it was we fell in with the division of Mustapha Pasha, going to the relief of that city.

The *Illustrated London News* of August 18th, 1877, contains a paragraph which vividly brings back to my



THE RELIEF OF KARS.

mind many curious incidents happening about this time. It ran as follows :—

“Another of our special artists, Mr. Irving Montagu, has also reached Kars with the army of Mukhtar Pasha, and we have received from him a number of sketches relating to the relief of that city on the 8th ult., one of them, which appears in a separate page, shows the Turkish artillery, under Mustapha Pasha, crossing the river of Kars. This was effected by means of a bridge of sunken bullock waggons.” So I have made this crossing under the protection of the batteries of Kars one of my illustrations.

The bringing up of horses and heavy guns, the hurry-scurry of the artillery, cavalry, and miscellaneous troops, who were hastening across that straining, creaking, impromptu bridge of sunken bullock waggons, the officers standing to their horses' girths in water directing operations, all come back vividly before me as I write. And so it was that we gradually drew closer and closer still, till the thunder of the guns on those heights culminated in a sullen roar like that of a sleepy lion.

Then the brighter colours of day became confused and blurred—for it was some time after the main reinforcements of Mustapha had occupied Kars that we closed up in the rear—just as a mist rose, obscuring the base of the rocks on which the citadel stands. And then, as if by common consent, the firing first flagged, then ceased, till all was strangely still and silent, while a metallic flood of gold from the west, suffusing the earth, told how yet another historic day had sunk to rest in Time's oblivion; then the blue overhead grew purple and more purple

still, and the stars began to glitter in the great unknown beyond, as if they were responsive signals to those flickering lights which appeared on the side of the city which we were approaching, and which offered no attraction to Russian attack.

Presently, with that rapidity peculiar to the East, the broad gold belt, against which Kars had but a moment before stood out as black as Erebus, narrowed its dimensions and was gone, and the thin crescent of a new moon rose significantly over the encamped Moslems in that



NOT DEAD YET!

silent stronghold where dying and living alike awaited the clarion which should call them to celestial peace or earthly war.

I was now holding on to Holmes' saddle, putting out my last remaining strength.

Yes; there, plainly enough in the distance, I could see the city gates through the growing darkness, till they became merged, as it were, in a sort of unnatural light—how or whence it came, I know not, and then——

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Personally, I remember nothing beyond this point till I found myself stretched on a table, in one of the filthiest holes that ever pretended to the name of café, though I was afterwards told that when only a few hundred yards from those gates I fell to the ground insensible, and was carried on an improvised litter to this dirty khan, where a crowd of villainous-looking ruffians gathered closely round me, to the exclusion of such little air as was to be obtained, for the express purpose of seeing an English pasha die.

I understand that a quantity of raki was administered to me; and this, probably, in the absence of any better restorative, assisted my coming to. I distinctly remember having taken in the situation as I glanced up at the wistful faces of those grimy curiosity-mongers, who had come to listlessly watch the passing of a Giaour to his happy hunting-grounds, for I am told that my first exclamation on coming to was "Not dead yet!" which Williams promptly translated, in his joy at my recovery, for the special benefit of those outwitted, disappointed scoundrels, who now, one by one, sheered off.

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Steep, irregular streets, houses unequal in size and shape, each outvying the other in ungainliness and filth, of such is the internal economy of Kars, one of the strongest military positions in the world. Properly garrisoned, it is said to be absolutely impregnable, unconquerable except by famine or treachery. From any other point of view, it is, perhaps, the most depressing and miserable of Eastern cities, a sort of Asiatic Ratcliffe Highway, rejoicing in a concentration of the innumerable

odours of which an utter absence of drainage, combined with vegetable and animal corruption of all kinds, may be supposed to consist; nevertheless, as part of the great quadrilateral of which Batoum, Erzeroum, and Trebizond are the three other points, it has long been a standing menace to invaders.



A CORNER IN KARS.

Those tortuous turnings, those grimy, greasy, scared-looking natives, many of whom had lived *al fresco* for months, come back to me now all too vividly. "Corners in Kars" would make a series of curiously-interesting sketches, its architecture being a nondescript conglomeration of styles which seemed thoroughly in accord with its equally nondescript population, some of whom yash-



BAYAZID

macked, and some not, were sleeping peacefully through sheer exhaustion, undisturbed by the din around them—a peace denied those who were all too painfully awake to the horrors of war.

Here, you would come upon a motley crew in rags and tatters, starving quietly in a death-trap of exhalations; there, up a dark entry, are a group of scared citizens and burly Circassians, with a sprinkling of the opposite sex, standing at some conveniently-sheltered corner, where a sort of Moorish frontage, painted in coarse colours on rough wood, give to all that remains of a sixth-rate khan a distant appearance of Eastern magnificence—a touch of romance to absolute squalor.

B-r-r-rr—boom! A shell has burst over the devoted city, and that touch of romance is superseded by the stern reality and necessities of war. Men, women, and children scuttle out from every conceivable corner, flying here, there, and everywhere, like so many scared rats, only to gravitate presently into fresh corners, trust once more to Kismet, and indulge, in the absence of raki, in that small modicum accorded them of the best of all cordials—Hope.

By the way, *apropos* of Kars, as the sequel shows, I may refer here to Bayazid, a city on the Persian frontier, in the Pashalik of Erzeroum, some fifteen miles from the historic Mount Ararat. This town forms one of my subjects for illustration; it has a painful interest, since here it was, during the time I was in Anatolia, that the Kurds committed unparalleled barbarities on the Christian and, indeed, Turkish inhabitants. So beautiful is its situation, so lovely its aspect from without, that it

is difficult to associate the place with cold-blooded murder.

On the massacres which took place there I have touched lightly, since the horrors were blood-curdling; but of two notorious individuals who were encamped under its walls, I can say something which will be of general interest.

Place aux dames! Let me introduce you to Fatima, a lovely young Arabian woman, fired by religious zeal, who took upon herself the supreme command of some Bedouin squadrons, which, under her able direction did prodigies of valour; and, what is more, she fired the heart of a Russian general, who, won over by her soft glances, deserted even his country to follow her fortunes, and when the assault on the Kizil-Tepe had been decided on, he rode by her side in front of her Arab irregulars.

One night they fell in with a Cossack patrol, with whom the renegade Russian (who now called himself Mousse Pasha) was able, of course, to converse freely, moreover giving the password, which, by some means, he had obtained. The Russians, supposing them in the darkness to be Russian irregulars, let them pass, when Mousse immediately turned and attacked those hood-winked Cossacks, nearly all of whom were either killed or made prisoners.

What Fatima did not win by force of arms, she succeeded in accomplishing with her eyes—great gazelle-like Arab eyes whose liquid depths seemed unfathomable; eyes which would have led you or me, reader, on—even had it been to Hades. The victories, however, of the fascinating Fatima were short-lived, for she was shot

through the breast not long before the fall of Kars. The Russians, who had heard of her fame and found her body, took her up tenderly, and with something of sentiment thrilling their rough soldier natures, consigned her in sad silence to her grave on the battle-field, a fitting sepulture for that bright-eyed Amazon—Fatima.

The other character of whom I would speak was of the opposite sex: a brigand chieftain, celebrated all over Asia Minor as a terror to the passing stranger, and who, having defied capture for years, now fired by patriotism had sent to Mukhtar Pasha offering his services in return for a free pardon. These terms having been accepted, he now with his wild hordes had become the General's ally.

Tulu Moussa or Hairy Moses, was a tall, angular creature, who seems to have had the scent of the blood-hound, and could manage a reconnaissance as no ordinary officer could pretend to do. In the secret service he had no rival, being amongst spies a veritable king, not only collecting information here and there, but actually getting in and out the Russian lines on more than one occasion in disguise. Indeed, he played the part so well as to be able to present to Mukhtar several sums of money given him by the Russians in consideration that he would bring information as to Turkish movements, when a considerable augmentation of the amount was promised.

In costume he was picturesqueness personified, a typical brigand of the first water his long olive green Circassian tunic reaching to his knees, richly embroidered with silver, while below this came red leather top boots, turned up, Turkish fashion, at the toes. His waist-belt was made of large silver coins (Medjidie's probably) each of which

had a filigree pattern engraved on it. Numbers of silver cartridge tubes decorated each breast, while his long Circassian daggers and huge sabre were, about hilt and sheath, one glittering combination of silver, lapis lazuli and coral. His followers were similarly though not so expensively dressed.

To Mukhtar, Tulu Moussa was worth his weight in gold.

“Set a thief to catch a thief” is a trite old saying, and if spies were to be caught, or rogues or deserters punished, the head of the Generalissimo’s “Intelligence Department,” Hairy Moses, was always the man to carry out instructions to perfection. He was “the best killed” man in Asia Minor, having, according to report, been done to death at least a dozen times in the neighbourhood of Kars, though rumour has it—and I think it right in this case—that he too is “not dead yet.”

It would have been impossible to have obtained, under any circumstances, a more comprehensive idea of war than from the heights of Kars, with its forbidding surroundings of great guns and rock-like masonry. Looking either out into the vast plains below, or on to the hills above, you had war, war everywhere, in one shape or another. Troops, looking like pigmies in the distance, defiling first one way then another; cavalry dashing off to take up positions of observation; artillery coming in, infantry going out, ambulances here, ammunition or store waggons there, Irregulars everywhere; and so on, to the end of the chapter.

Talking of Irregulars brings one to the natural savagery of the many tribes who foregathered at that time in

that part of the world, and who, under the plea of Holy War, came from all sorts of out-of-the-way places ostensibly to fight for the Crescent, but *really* to look after themselves. Probably the Christians in the province of Van suffered most, the much talked of Bulgarian atrocities not comparing with the wholesale outrages of all kinds which they had to endure; torture, mutilation, and murder being of every-day occurrence. One incident which came within my own experience, will serve as a case in point.

It was that of a poor peasant (a widower), who, bound hand and foot in his mud hovel, was propped up in this manner to sit and watch his own child spitted and roasted alive before his eyes. The pleasure seekers having enjoyed the situation to the full left that ruined home, the poor man being found there later on screaming with laughter—a raving lunatic.

There was a veritable reign of terror at one time during this Asiatic campaign, no one being safe, even for the shortest distance without a very strong escort. Circassians and Kurds seemed alike soulless and savage to the last degree, having the same feeling for the Giaour as the Devil is supposed to have for Holy water.

Since I was still suffering from my recent experiences, I was glad to “bide a wee,” and to the distracting music of bursting shells and the more distant rattle of musketry finish a fresh batch of sketches, destined for the first brigand or other messenger I could find, who, as I have already explained, was always made thoroughly to appreciate the fact that though perfectly worthless to him,

their safe delivery in Erzeroum would mean untold largess.

Though this is not a dissertation on war, or the politics of the period, though I do not attempt to discuss the campaign from a military standpoint, as other and abler contemporary writers on these subjects have done, and though for the benefit of my critics I repeat these are simply *the wanderings* of a war artist; yet it will not be uninteresting to know, not only how staunch to the end was the defence of Kars but what subtle engineering tactics were displayed by the invaders, whose batteries, to a great extent, circumvented it. Not only an almost impregnable vantage point itself, the Tabias, or fortified portions which surrounded it, made it infinitely more formidable. To be in one of these, under heavy Russian fire was to realise, not only what shells on their own account could do, but the additional danger from splinters of the rocks against which they crashed, thousands of pieces of which were sent flying with tremendous force in all directions, from which many hundreds received fatal wounds.

Although the Russian fire was concentrated chiefly on the forts, shells repeatedly fell in the town, not, however, doing so much harm as might be supposed, though one case happened in which a mother and her two or three children were at the same moment sent into eternity by one of these deadly messengers. That mortality was much less in the towns proper, may not only be accounted for by the sighting of the enemy's guns, but by the fact that the people themselves hid away in the most unheard of corners, nooks and crannies each day

during the time when the contending forces were most active, while towards evening, when those Russian Krupp 16½-centimetre guns had grown hoarse from belching forth destruction, poor humanity would creep out to seek for food and stretch its limbs, with eyes dazed and dilated, as if haunted by the spirit of horrors.

But was it not Kismet that so ordained this respite should be afforded them, and were good Moslems ever indifferent to that? Indeed, there was one curious illustration of this submission to fate.

Fifteen soldiers, who had been sentenced to be shot for cowardice, were drawn up one day for execution, and placed in line facing the firing party. Twelve fell; three, however, were only slightly wounded. These were at once taken into the hospital, and being cured, were reinstated in their former military position. Favourites of the Fates, they had passed through the ordeal and been spared by Kismet.

I think perhaps the most fitfully terrible aspect under which the grim fortress could be seen was just when not only time-shells were bursting in mid air, and percussions dashing to fragments everything with which they came in contact, but when, in the midst of all the destruction which the inventive mind of man could conceive, the elements joined in concert, and one of those heavy Asiatic storms raged of which the stay-at-home Englishman can have no idea. Then Muscovite and Turkish artillery blended with the prolonged roar of the thunders overhead, and flash after flash of forked lightning lit up the camp and rent asunder the heavy black clouds above us, which each moment rising higher had already

half hidden the great red disc of the sun, fiery and bloodshot as it was now slowly descending in the west. Coupled with this, too, we were enveloped in a downpour of hail and rain, and worried by a whirlwind calculated to take us off our legs at any moment. When, in your mind's eye you can picture this, then you can, perhaps, get some faint idea of what happens when heaven and earth unite in making the prospect of coming night doubly hideous.

I am not likely, for my own part, to forget our forced march to Kars, for though at first to some extent I recovered, it was not long before a relapse set in, and a painful complaint known as erythema, brought on from over-exhaustion and poorness of living seized me, the dropsical nature of which caused my limbs to swell to such an extent that the prospect of a permanent residence in that city of smells began to present itself; and since locomotion became really difficult, my first consideration was to secure, as soon as possible, a horse in place of the late lamented Barkus. This, after considerable trouble, I was fortunate enough in doing, though I found it utterly impossible to replenish our stores, as in view of a long-protracted siege nothing, at any price, could be spared from the commissariat. As it was, the living in Kars was abominable, though this was a condition of affairs with which, in my experiences of other sieges, I had grown familiar.

About this time a messenger from Erzeroum arrived with letters, amongst which was a characteristic one from Mrs. Zohrab, the consul's wife, from which I may quote with a view to giving some idea of how the uncertainties

of war influence even the gentler sex; at least, how at that time it influenced the gentlest of her sex in Erzeroum.

. . . . Thanks for your welcome note, and a peep at those charming sketches. How I wish that "to-morrow" would dawn, for all our sakes. We are wild with impatience at getting no news. . . . One day we hear that Kars is taken, another that the Russians have quite disappeared, and the following day news comes of the bombardments continuing; after which, the old story begins again. I'm so disgusted at not having anything nice to send you. I expected long ago to see you back here. My husband says sardines and biscuits are the best things; bread gets stale. . . We have had the most abominable weather here, hail-stones as big as pigeons' eggs, furious winds, rain and thunder; to-day things look more peaceful. Now that the elements have ceased raging, I wish the armies would take up the game and finish it up quickly. Excuse this dreadful effusion, which is a true reflection of our present condition of "hope deferred." All of us join in best regards to you, and in sincere sympathy with your present privations, which we hope will be speedily brought to an end by some conclusive fighting.

Yours truly,

E. ZOHRAB.

The stream of Asiatic history being no more affected by your scribe's return to Europe than it need be in this chronicle, I would add that since the decisive fight at Zevin, victory crowned the efforts of Mukhtar Pasha. First occupying Kars, he pushed on nearly to Erivan, holding in fact almost all the trump cards in his hands, when suddenly the tide turned, defeat following defeat, till retreat, irreparable retreat, was all that was left to that great general.

Since the opportunity may not again occur, I may here refer to the combined influence of piety and pluck which, by example to his soldiers, that devout Moslem Mukhtar Pasha succeeded in exercising over the army of Asia Minor.

During the Ramazan, from early dawn till the holy gun

at night boomed out its permission to satisfy the cravings of the inner man, the true devotee eats or drinks nothing, nor would the most tempting offer of tobacco to the weary soldier make him forget for one moment the duty he owed to Allah. Periodically, during the day, would the Imaums call the troops to prayer with shouts of "Allah Akhbar, la Allah il Allah!" when they would prostrate themselves before the great God of whom Mahomet was the true prophet. Nor in the bloodiest fighting were these religious exercises relaxed, a piety, by the way, curiously associated with retaliation, which they are said in war to hold sacred, and which sanctions the torture and murder of the wounded Infidel, which was generally supposed to apply to those wounded Russians who found themselves in Turkish hands.

I should be very sorry to say that such *was* the case, though I remember much rejoicing having taken place amongst the Britishers attached to the army on the discovery, on one occasion, in their midst of a real live Russian drummer boy, the first Russian prisoner in evidence for some considerable time.

It was General Hetmann's brilliant victory of Mount Acolias which, in his then extremity, cut Mukhtar's army in two, Sazereff's division intercepting those who retreated on Kars, when 7,000 prisoners and four guns fell into the hands of the Muscovites, the Turkish right wing being driven from its position on the Aladja Dagh, and confusion reigning triumphant. Mukhtar having now nothing left to him, rushed back into Kars. This movement was followed by that long-drawn-out effort, that hope against hope, which still led the Turkish general to hold on; and

then—well, then came the drop scene, Kars, the great corner stone of the quadrilateral, one of the strongest fortresses in the world—fell.

All who could, made off in hot haste for Erzeroum, this being the next point to which the retiring Moslems clung. True, should they not be intercepted, they still had the Kop-dagh, perhaps the finest military point in the country, to call their own; from which, however, if once dislodged all would be lost. Such was the condition of affairs when Mukhtar retreated from Kars on Erzeroum.

Nor was it long before the capitulation of the *former* place was followed by that of the latter. Thus on those battlements so toughly contested against tremendous odds, where the crescent and the star had proudly floated, the Russian eagle eventually fluttered in the breeze.

Thus rounding off events, however, I have, from an historic point of view, anticipated them by several months, for it must be remembered that the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Scotsman*, and myself were, when this leap into futurity was made, just starting from Kars, *ensemble* to join respectively the Russian and Turkish forces in Europe. Let us hasten, therefore, to renew the thread of our narrative.

It was our second night out; we had travelled since dawn on our return from Kars to Erzeroum. As we rested under the shadow of some overhanging rocks, the fertile valley below—for we were now at a great elevation—looked like a many coloured Turkish carpet spread out before us, and with the assistance of a map and compass we were glad to find that our route for some

distance lay in that promising direction, and still more so that at no very great distance we could see through our field-glasses a village, probably some six or seven miles off, about which a thin thread, like a tributary of the Araxes might be seen winding. Indeed, this last discovery acted as a special impetus to push forward. Suffice it to say, in course of time we reached the main stream, the Araxes itself, so glorified by Xenophon, and so enjoyed by us as we bathed in its cool inviting depths, quite innocent of the innumerable water snakes which are said to abound there. Coming within touch of a luxury so seldom met with in our travels, the temptation was too great; we could not resist it.

But, O ye gods, that dip! The penalty we had to pay for cleanliness! It came with a vengeance, and we were not prone, from that time, to wonder at the native antipathy to water.

Of course, to be able to *wash* was a blessing only to be enjoyed at such very rare intervals, that the various animalculæ which owed their existence to us, lost their cunning in a few days, and after a night or two of "khan life" became, even to Britishers quite endurable. Not that the irritating armies make for "fresh woods and pastures new"; far from it. They, so to speak, seemed to ruminate upon the dusty humanity they had so recently and so vigorously attacked. But oh! what "a change comes o'er the spirit of their dream" when the traveller has availed himself of his very exceptional chance of a dip. With a clean, clear course before them, fresh, healthy (muscular) undulating pasture lands on which to graze, it may be faintly imagined—only faintly—on put-

ting on one's clothes again what an *awful* condition of active operation at once commences—maddening titillation would hardly be the term for it.

As time wore on, every moment brought us nearer to that haven where the rest and refreshment we so much needed were, we hoped, to be found. So, hungry as hunters, we hastened forward, past what had been tobacco plantations, fields of wheat and other grain, now all churned into a muddy conglomerate by the artillery and cavalry which had but recently preceded us; at length, with a weary sigh of relief, we approached the outskirts of the long-looked for village.

Strange! No barking of dogs announced our arrival—no open-mouthed natives came out to stare—no village idiot came with his incredulous glances to scrutinise us. No; not a sound. All was quiet as the grave, for not only was that village a deserted one, but one that had been completely ransacked by Cossacks, who had left behind them many traces of their cruel passage through it.

There is a silence far more intense than that of the desert itself. A sea of sand provokes no suggestion of active life, but a village in peace times, with its merry hum of children's voices, its cocks, hens, ducks, oxen, sheep, goats, and barking dogs, is so much a centre of vitality, that this one to us seemed the very acme of desolation.

Here was a predicament for a *posse* of hungry men, made more ravenous by sheer anticipation of a meal; for only having here and there by the way obtained insufficient scraps since we started, we were now in an almost famishing condition. Two of our guards at once

galloped off to scour the neighbourhood, and after a considerable time returned with two small loaves of black bread, secured—goodness knows how!

Hungry as these two brawny guards were, their sense of honour was curiously strained. They would not, either of them, probably have had any scruples about cutting a throat or robbing a traveller—brigandism seems innate in these regions—but to touch a crumb by the way under those circumstances was impossible; so the two loaves of black bread were brought intact and laid at our feet. These we divided amongst those guards, the arabaji and Johannes; our *three* selves and Williams dividing a small pot of Liebig's Essence of Meat (our last) into equal parts with a penknife, from which we convinced ourselves we had gained sufficient sustenance to hold on.

"The way," however, was not only long, but "the wind was cold" that night as we dragged along wearily; and as the light merged into darkness and we rode up hill and down dale, through mountain fastnesses and forest glades, nature began to assert herself unpleasantly in connection with that vacuum she is said to abhor. Nor was this all, for a dense fog having risen we found ourselves utterly at sea as to our whereabouts, and beyond the fact that we were in a neighbourhood where skirmishing Cossacks most probably might be, and where Kurd robbers most certainly were, we knew nothing. For some time we had lost the beaten track, and all we could realise was, that we were ascending higher and higher in an unpleasantly vague way, the sound of a swollen water-course past which we had come becoming perceptibly fainter and fainter still as we did so. Holmes's horse

at last breaking down from sheer want of food and having to be led, and the one Johannes rode rapidly becoming more or less in the same condition, we decided to make a halt and go no further that night.

Thus, exhausted, hungry, and wet through, we were indeed all round in a miserable condition ; to convey an idea of which I cannot perhaps do better than quote a description of what followed, contributed by myself to the pages of *Good Words*.



CHAPTER V.

ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION—A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE—A MIDDLE-AGED SPIDER—A LOVELY LILIPUTIAN—A PROLIFIC LAND—CURIOUS CIPHER—SLAVERY—A CHARMING BARGAIN—CONSUL ZOHRAB—POWER OF THE PRESS—EATEN ALIVE—SITTING ON THE “DAILY NEWS”—ERZEROUM—SIR ARNOLD KEMBALL—A HAREM EN DÉSHABILLE—THE MERRY MAJOR—PITCHED FROM A PRECIPICE—SUPERSTITIONS—DOOMED—THE BEAUTY OF BAGDAD.

SINCE I perfectly agree with that philosophic soul who once suggested the advisability of borrowing from oneself, by the temporary deposit of one's watch at one's “uncle's,” as being a course far more independent than that of circumventing a friend or falling back upon an I O U, I cannot do better than continue this narrative by submitting my original notes of the following experience.

“It was now well into the night, and as the hours between that time and daylight could not be occupied by a continuance of those vague wanderings, we had to camp as best we could. This had to be done with some discretion, so that our whereabouts might not be discovered by any prowling Kurds or Circassian malcontents, who at any moment might come down in overwhelming numbers on our little troop; even the luxury of pipes being denied, lest the tell-tale spark should betray us.

Thus we crept noiselessly along till we were enveloped in a tangled mass of long dank grass and lost in brush-wood, each man carefully leading his horse with one hand, while in the other he held his six-shooter ready for emergencies.

“Half an hour had probably been thus occupied and still no convenient place had been found, when Johannes’ horse, utterly exhausted, fell by the way. This, accompanied by the distant sound of trickling water, which promised well for the morning, decided beyond argument our course. To go further having become impossible, it was thought wise by some before we rested to ascertain the whereabouts of the water-course. This however was overruled by the majority, so we proceeded to bivouac.

“It was an intensely dark night, and we could scarcely see an inch before our noses. When tethering our horses, one slipped over what we supposed to be the rough edge of a ditch. He so soon recovered himself, however, that this trifling circumstance would not have attracted notice had not my dragoman again called my attention to that sound of rippling waters, again suggesting that it would be better, he thought, to move a little nearer the inviting allurement; but finding that several of our party had picqueted their horses meanwhile and were already rolled up, prepared to snatch what sleep they could, we abandoned the idea.

“Indeed, a few minutes later all remembrance of that dreary night’s ride was steeped in sweet forgetfulness. But now comes the *dénouement*.

“At the first streak of dawn, we untethered our horses and prepared for our onward journey; a dense vapour

making all as imperceptible around us as if we had still been enveloped in the shades of night. This, happily, was not long in lifting, and then it was that we realised the terrible death which we had so narrowly escaped.

“We had actually encamped on the very edge of a most frightful precipice; so close, in fact, that the correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian*, my dragoman and myself, had



A PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE.

slept upon its very brink, where that horse, happily recovering himself, had stumbled, and the rippling water which had so tempted us to advance a little further was now to be seen, like a silver thread, wending its way hundreds of feet below.”

We had been on the verge of a danger little anticipated; a collapse more complete than our wildest imagination could possibly have conjured up. Yet, in this highly cultured nineteenth century of ours, how many so-called

scientists there are who, putting down that which comes within their own small limits of penetration to natural influence, ignore altogether that first of all causes—the Deity, to whose marvellous providence we are all indebted for salvation from the pitfalls into which, in our blind ignorance, we should otherwise continually stumble. It was no chance or accident which made us hesitate on that very brink of destruction, when allured by the sound of those rippling waters. No; “there is a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may.”

Suddenly finding oneself about to spend a night in the open, in some unknown locality, one is naturally subject to many surmises, for which fatigue finds a compensating balance in the shape of sleep. We had had serious reasons to anticipate a night attack from Kurdish brigands, nor did the many savage beasts of the forest, described by the natives as being in abundance, fail to concern us, though, in an experience extending over many years, I have found, when travelling in remote places, the proverbially *wild* animal conspicuous by its absence. True, by laying a snare overnight, the bear and (occasionally) the cheeta, the wolf and jackal, and, of course, many varieties of birds of prey will come to the fore; but, as a rule, there is a certain bashfulness about these lords of the forest which, unless indeed they are driven by hunger, which cannot be too highly esteemed.

One object which struck me was a huge, formidable-looking spider. It was, I understood, quite harmless; but, nevertheless, the first time I saw one—it just a little disconcerted me. Its eyes (large dark ones) winked and blinked at me from out its great head, and as it waddled

towards me on its great long hairy legs, it had a curiously knowing, almost human, aspect. I felt it was alternately grinning and frowning at me, suggesting as it did so a middle-aged gentleman with great goggle spectacles looking for lodgings in a quiet neighbourhood.

Then, again, talking of things small but interesting, there was a wonderful owl to be found in these latitudes, a little thing about three and a half inches high, the loveliest Liliputian it is possible to imagine ; it looked as if specially designed by Nature to perch on the helmet of some tiny Minerva in the land of sprites.

Surely such a country as this, teeming with mineral wealth, and prolific as it is in many parts as far as vegetation is concerned, should have long since commended itself to the speculative civilizers of modern times. Good roads, communicating with the coast, might be the first step towards railways, which would rapidly connect the Persian markets with those of Europe, at the same time opening up the country through which they passed. And then, if the denizens of the forest were driven a little further afield, and that curiously inquisitive, middle-aged spider had, with the diminutive owl, to find "fresh hunting-grounds," still the country would have been developed, the ends of science served, and the world benefited to no small extent, after all.

The word science seems, though for no particular reason, to bring me to *cipher*, so I may here refer, in passing, to some of the many ingenious methods for conveying secret information from place to place resorted to during war.

It was explained to me how *supposed* orders of a commercial kind for supplies—say, bread, rice, fodder, &c.,

each word having, in a key, a military significance—are very commonly used. Thus, supposing the word “send” to mean *advancing*, and “10,000 bags” to mean 10,000 *Russians*, and “of” to mean *on*, and “rice” to mean *Kars*, then the reading of the sentence “Send 10,000 bags of rice” would mean—“*10,000 Russians advancing on Kars.*” But an infinitely simpler cipher than this is, I understood, often put into successful operation.

It is that of an empty envelope being sent from one place to another, with no clue whatever to its real meaning. Of course, guesses may be made at the method of address, but to rely on this would be more misleading than enough, since the message is actually conveyed through the postage-stamp. This is arranged by the *angle* at which it is affixed, those having the key being able to ascertain to a nicety the message conveyed. Thus, an angle of 75 deg. means, on the key, “Russians advancing”; while 45 deg. signifies “Send reinforcements”; and so on, till all the degrees of a circle have been exhausted, each with a communication expressed by the angle at which that stamp is placed.

Leaving cipher to the practice of those it most concerns, and taking events in their due course, I will now deal with the only actual experience of slavery, as a system, which came under my personal observation in Asia Minor. It was in the next village at which we halted that a charming little slave, a child of about twelve years of age, was offered me for four Turkish pounds (£3 12s.), or, what they would infinitely have preferred for her, barter—money in these parts being naturally far less valuable than that which represents it. Indeed, in many

cases, the women of the villages through which Englishmen had passed had made holes in the coins they had given them, wearing them as adornments for their hair.

This little one, offered me most beseechingly by her parents, was likely to develop into a lovely example of Eastern beauty; and though it seems paradoxical that those parents who wished to dispose of her should be as fond of her as they seemed, yet they showed their really unselfish love by wishing their favourite should find that comfort and happiness which they, in their ignorance, supposed must of necessity belong to wealthier and more civilized states; though, of course filthy lucre *did* play *some* part in the proposed transaction. However, though I might from the purest motives have rescued this fair Circassian (for she was a Circassian by birth) from a semi-barbarous life, I was proof against the temptation to turn slave-owner, confining myself to making her a present of several silver coins, with which she appeared delighted, while to her fond father I gave an old briar-root pipe—a pipe of consolation, touching that “deal” which never came off.

Whilst in that village, too, I remember how Williams came to us one day much excited and delighted with a treasure he had found; one beyond price, though its intrinsic value was, when new, exactly one halfpenny. It was, of all things in the world to be found up country in Anatolia, an *Echo*, “an ‘apenny Hecker,” as the London street boys put it, months and months old, one which had evidently been used for packing purposes by others passing through, and afterwards discarded. It was crumpled up and damp, but intact, affording us a

refreshing glimpse of that world we had now so long left behind us ; a practical demonstration of the fact that there is no corner of the earth where the power of the British press may not penetrate. We knew that paper by heart, old as the news was—oh, yes ! advertisements, and



“ ECHO, SIR ? ”

all, long, long before we reached Erzeroum ; which, weary, travel-stained, weak and jaded, we succeeded in doing without further experiences of any special interest two days later.

Of course we pulled up at the British consulate, and had we been his own kith and kin, Consul Zohrab could

not have given us a warmer welcome ; indeed, if he did not actually kill the fatted calf, it was because there was no fatted calf to kill. Our next consideration was a Turkish bath ; and the luxury which followed—that of fresh clothes—was a treat never to be forgotten. We very much wished to preserve and bring home the picturesque, many-coloured Eastern costumes which we had found it necessary to wear as a protection so far throughout the campaign, but unfortunately all the fumigating, washing, and shaking in the world would not exterminate the *little* army in occupation ; so they were committed to the flames.

That night we dined at the consulate, the first on which we had eaten like ordinary human beings for many months. Drs. Casson and Featherstonhaugh—the two medical men sent out by the Stafford House Committee to represent the interests of the Red Cross in Asia Minor—were of the party. Dr. Casson, who was himself suffering from a kind of low fever, and on whom climatic influences had told terribly, had his professional eye fixed on me from the moment I entered, and as soon as opportunity served, assured me that I was much worse than I thought I was, advising me to remain in the old consulate, the quarters I had had before, for at least a week before I continued my journey.

This I knew I could not do, but I found three days absolutely necessary, during which he crept in from time to time from his quarters, ill as he was himself, to look after me. He was perfectly right, too ; I had not by any means recovered from the effect of the over-exertion of that last lap of the journey to Kars, and now erythema

having set in more acutely than ever, I suffered agonies. Very soon my feet and legs became swollen to such an enormous size that walking was barely possible. It is impossible for me to over-estimate, when so ill himself, the kindly consideration extended to me by one who has, I have heard recently, succumbed to malaria on the Persian frontier.



I AM VISITED BY DR. CASSON.

On the second night of my stay in Erzeroum, Williams and I were alone in that dilapidated old consulate, when we suddenly heard the wildest and most terrifying shrieks proceeding from another apartment in the building, at which, as you may imagine, we were not a little astonished.

“Sheitan! Sheitan!—Devil! Devil! May the curse of the Prophet light on his head, we have eaten the accursed thing. We have eaten it—I tell you. We, the faithful sons of Mahomet, have eaten the Giaour’s pig.”

This hastily translated to me, accompanied by many

shots and much clashing of lethal weapons, was calculated to make me, though I had scarcely a leg to stand upon, raise myself as best I could and hasten with Williams in the direction of the disturbance down a dark corridor, "Sheitan! Dog of a Giaour!" &c., &c., increasing as we advanced.

The next moment, a lantern threw a broad light across a passage which led to a flight of narrow steep steps that communicated with the street below. This passage ran at right angles to the one in which we were. It was more like a scene from the *Arabian Nights*, or an Eastern extravaganza, than anything else I can imagine.

First there rushed past us three hairy Circassians, their many-coloured, long picturesque garbs fluttering in the wind, flourishing their drawn swords in all directions and flying for dear life, shouting as they passed "Sheitan! Sheitan!" at the top of their voices. Next there rushed past us two veritable Turks of the bright baggy trousers and monster turban type, which in our juvenile days we associated with *Bluebeard* or *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. These, in their excitement, cushioned against the Circassians, yelling as they rushed madly out, "Oh, Mahomet, Mahomet!"

In turn these were followed by yet another, with a lantern slung at his waist, a revolver in one hand and a huge scimitar in the other, who, representing the expelling force, flew past us bent, apparently, on murder.

The velocity with which those three Circassians and two Turks went headlong down that stone staircase was frightful to see; but what was far more terrifying to me in the dim light was (fancying, from his costume, yet

another offending Turk was left) that this redoubtable pasha, returning in breathless haste from his wild pursuit, now seized the advancing Williams by the throat, when, after a moment's struggle, they fell with a heavy thud to the ground together, and lay there motionless.

What *could* I do?

I was certainly not in fighting form; so seizing the opportunity, I sat upon them both as they lay locked in each other's grasp, holding them down as best I



"ILLUSTRATED NEWS" SITTING ON THE "DAILY NEWS."

could, for, the lantern having gone out, I was in the awkward predicament of not knowing which one to release. On their getting restive again, I fired several shots from my revolver high in air, which, as I had hoped it might, brought succour and light—when, to my utter amazement, the hero of a hundred fights and Williams, more confused than hurt, were discovered.

I could hardly believe my eyes. Yet, so it was. One glance of recognition, and the tale was told—one crushed,

heartbroken look from the prostrate pasha who, in excellent English, with a slight Hibernian accent, bewailingly cried :

“Oh ! no, no ! Montagu—I *can* stand Circassians and Turks *ad infinitum*, but I *can't* stand the *Illustrated News* sitting on the *Daily News*.”

It was quite pathetic. I arose, with that generosity begotten of true magnanimity, and the power of the press no longer held down my old friend Edmund O'Donovan—O'Donovan Pasha of the *Daily News*—through whose oriental garb I could not at first penetrate, and who that evening had been experimentalizing on Moslem punctiliousness by endeavouring to persuade his guests to indulge in some disguised preparation of pork, which he had brought in for their special refecton from the Greek quarter of Erzeroum.

In a fit of that wild buoyancy peculiar to him, that overflowing of animal spirits to which he was subject, especially when an underlying joke tickled his fickle fancy, he had suddenly elected to test the faith of the worthies we have just seen so ignominiously expelled. His revolver shots had evidently scared them, otherwise they might have made mincemeat of our erratic special.

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The wretchedness of Erzeroum during the war fever was scarcely eclipsed by that of Kars, which was daily added to by crowds of scared villagers, who might be met out on the rocky plains round about the Deve Boyun pass, hurrying into the comparative security of that city from neighbouring villages. Men, women, and children jostled and disputed with horses, mules, buffaloes, and camels



SIR ARNOLD KEMBALL.

every inch which brought them nearer to the protection its walls afforded, though within its gates things did not look reassuring; natives in rags and tatters sat about at street corners, starved and wretched, and old mortality spread disease and death broadcast, while through the long hours of the night, to add to the surrounding misery, lean, hungry-looking, man-eating dogs howled a hideous refrain, which seemed a fitting accompaniment to the horrors about them.

It was curious to note how correspondents at this time were looked on as prophets whose forecasts might be thoroughly relied upon, and to whom the natives came for reliable information about future events, as if those worthies were in direct communication with the stars. Sir Arnold Kemball's movements, too, at one time had a marked effect on the Erzeroum markets, a political point being attributed to all he did—his going in one direction meaning the abandonment of Turkish interests by the British; in another, the reverse—till I verily believe, like a political weathercock, the inhabitants watched his smallest actions, in order that they might find out, as they thought, which way the wind blew.

I was loth to leave Erzeroum without adding a few sketches of the place to those I was sending off to England by the *Tatas*, or mountain muleteer mail-carriers, who, some twelve or fourteen in number, with an escort of native Irregulars, carry letters from place to place.

These finished, I managed to get to Dr. Casson's hospital for further advice before leaving; this hospital was really an old khan of great size, with a stone courtyard, having numerous rooms opening from it, and afford-

ing admirable opportunity for the disposal of the wounded, while convalescent soldiers could sit about in the enclosure.

It was astonishing with what difficulties those two indefatigable officers of the Red Cross, Casson and Feathers-tonhaugh, had to contend in performing operations, not only for want of instruments and proper supplies which had not arrived, but from the patients themselves. You would scarcely believe it, but invariably those poor wretches refused, even when told that their lives depended on it, to submit to the amputation of a limb; and, stranger still, it was no coward corporeal fear which actuated them in their determination. No, it was simply this. Just as those who die on the actual battle-field are said by the Koran to go straight to heaven, so also are those who lose an arm or leg supposed to go equally straight to Paradise, though minus that previously amputated limb—hence, “I will never hop into heaven” was the English of the plea they were perpetually setting up in their struggles against the surgeon’s knife.

I remember seeing one very curious case of this kind. Originally it was a bullet-wound in the foot, which by amputation would probably have left the poor sufferer yet long years of life before him, but his religious scruples overcame him till mortification set in. An operation higher up was then found to be the only means of saving him. But no; he still held out. Nothing in the world would persuade him to give way; and when I saw him, so terribly had decomposition set in that there was little more than a skeleton leg and foot left, while the poor fellow shrieked in his agony from that self-inflicted martyrdom as he waited for death.

Curiously illogical it all was, too ; for the Houri of the Moslem Paradise could hardly approve so much of a hero with a skeleton leg as one who was minus a foot or an arm. But, after all, there was *much* to be admired in their implicitly blind faith—a faith which would have put to shame many a so-called “Christian” had his profession of belief been equally tested.

Now, whilst on the subject of hospitals, I may refer to a very graphic description given by one of the *Daily News* correspondents of Dr. Casson’s field ambulance near Kars.

I had retired to my tent, and sunk into an uneasy slumber. A thundering detonation aroused me ; a heavy shell had burst within twenty yards of my tent. I sprang to my feet and rushed out. The white smoke was still curling upwards from the frosty turf, torn into a black circle by the shell. Another projectile whistled over my head, and burst against the rocks beyond. Everyone in the ambulance was astir ; we were being deliberately shelled. Dr. Casson, only half-dressed, was having his sick and wounded carried on litters higher up the mountain, out of range of the 16-centimetre projectiles. The young volunteer doctor was prostrate after the reaction of a severe attack of typhoid. I leaped to a horse as the second projectile burst, and never shall I forget that poor feeble young man lying among the bare black rocks in the grey mountain air as I galloped by. If the Russians fired deliberately on the ambulance, it was a piece of atrocity. I can scarce believe it was so.

But enough of the horrors of the hospital and ambulance, though one may never sufficiently dilate on the heroism of those single-minded Englishmen, several of whom fell in the good cause, and *all* of whom honourably sustained the reputation of Britishers at the front. We, however, were obliged to push forward to that new field for pen and pencil which was now opening out to us in Europe.

We all very naturally felt a pang at leaving our kind friends in Erzeroum, who accompanied us far beyond the city limits ; and it was with many warm adieux, and hopes expressed on both sides that we might some

day meet again in the old country, that we did so. Our next halt would be at the village of Illege; nothing happened for some time worthy of record, unless, indeed, I refer to the way in which, when passing troops, the British Press were here, as elsewhere, often saluted. A sketch found in an old drawer has just reminded me of one of many such receptions, on all of which occasions I felt infinitely more like a *generalissimo* than—well, than I have ever felt since.



SALUTING THE "ILLUSTRATED NEWS" IN ASIA MINOR.

See! yonder are the domes and minarets of the little village where we are to pass the night, this completing the first stage from Erzeroum of our return journey towards Trebizond.

If there is a spot on earth where the far-famed Pears would find his advertisements unheeded, it would be, I should say, in the village of Illege, the sulphur springs of



AN EXODUS.

which are warranted to purify, without the aid of soap, every good Moslem who may bathe in their bubbling waters. Physical as well as mental pains may thus be equally banished in this earthly paradise, where immunity from every ill, from toothache to taxes, may alike be secured, and body and soul washed white under the mosquelike dome of this temple of health.

Nay, more ; not only is it renowned for its relief of physical and mental ailments, but its waters are actually supposed to renew youth and preserve beauty ; no wonder, then, that when we arrived it was occupied by the wives of a small local pasha. So of course, in common gallantry, we prepared to journey on and leave the curative and beautifying powers of the Illege sulphur springs to those fair ones and future travellers.

Before doing so, however, we stopped at a small, grimy khan for rest, where we had not long dismounted when our attention being called to the rear of the baths, we saw a long ghostlike troop of women wending their hurried way, single file, up a neighbouring hill, dressing, it seemed, as they went. We were naturally inquisitive as to the cause of such a commotion, but the reason was soon explained by a native, who, whilst we were watching those mysterious ladies, had placed himself before us at the khan door, and bowing to the ground commenced a long oration, which, when translated, was literally to the effect that the proprietor of the baths having turned the matter over in his mind, had ultimately come to the conclusion that three British Pashas were worth considerably more than any number of Turkish women ; and so, without the slightest notice, he had had them unceremoniously turned

out, neck and crop—whether they were prepared or not being no concern of his—and now sent to tell us that if we would rid ourselves of bodily ailments and mental anxieties we were at liberty to do so, for the coast was clear.

“Men may come and men may go” in Anatolia, as elsewhere, but it is not often given—to any save pashas themselves—to see the ladies of a harem *en déshabille*, as we did there. Nor was this the only occasion on which our eyes rested on these sirens of the seraglio. More than once we met them hurrying away before the Russian advance, never forgetting, however great their trepidation, that the most gauzy yashmack was the most becoming. Parasols, too, seemed strangely enough to have peculiar attractions for them, the ruling spirit of the harem thus unexpectedly on tour generally securing one of the seodd links between the boulevards of Europe and the remote villages of the Orient; indeed, it is to one of these fair ones, surrounded by the impedimenta of her lord and master, that I refer in the accompanying illustration, taken from a sketch done high up in the mountains of Anatolia.

I must say the sensation of bathing in these sulphur waters was unique, their buoyancy, especially if you stood where they bubbled up through the clear pebbly bottom, being most remarkable. There was no keeping one's feet down against the force with which those jets of hot sulphur rose from below. I do not know that I felt much younger personally after my dip, the pleasures of which had been, to a great extent, marred by the brusque behaviour of that grimy old proprietor, who had certainly



THE QUEEN OF HIS HEART.

never indulged in his own panacea. Our memory of this old curmudgeon, however, was eclipsed by an amusing experience we had the following evening, when, finding the village khan which had been allotted to us was so perfectly alive with bugs, that the plaster walls looked like an ever-changing madder-brown pattern on a dirty white ground, we determined to camp out in the open. Long since we had learnt to put up with such discomforts in moderation, but on this occasion the enemy were too numerous, so we elected to have a tent pitched on the flat mud roof of the khan rather than sleep within it.

It was while superintending this change of quarters that, followed by an escort, a Turkish major of distinguished appearance rode past us in the footpath below, and said something in his own language, to which Williams replied, the gist of it being that the Kaimakam (Local Governor) of the district being absent he—the Major, had possession of his comfortable quarters, which he asked us to share, at the same time hoping we would dine with him that evening.

I need hardly say we were delighted to accept his courtesy and, repacking our supplies, followed him to a superior-looking building at the end of the village. Here was luxury of which we had never dreamt, a large, apparently clean square room, round which were divan seats, covered with elaborate silk stuffs, and in the centre of which stood several small inlaid octagonal tables, on which black coffee was placed and brought conveniently near to where we sat smoking, cross-legged, our hospitable entertainer's cigarettes; as far as smiles and amiability went, he did the honours of host most genially. Finding presently

that our interpreter Williams was with us, he turned to him and said—

“I hope the Pashas are not hungry. True, I invited them to dine with me, but it was the sight of their supply waggon which suggested the invitation. See; as far as my poor hospitality goes, I extend it. If the Kaimakam should arrive to-night, he will not be admitted. Rather let him sleep with the village dog than disturb the Pashas whom I have made my guests, so you can tell them they may rest assured they will be comfortable till morning; and tell them, too, that if *they* are hungry *I* am absolutely ravenous, and that the sooner they bring in what good things they have, the sooner all our appetites will be satisfied.”

It was a peculiarly novel way of requisitioning, which much amused us; and so, after having seen to the creature comforts of our guards and Johannes, we brought in a goodly supply of eatables, together with a bottle of brandy—for our own special benefit, of course—placing them, with this latter exception, in the hands of the Kaimakam's cook, who, on his part, we discovered had nothing to serve up but the eternal youart and pilaffe. Our appetites were already well sharpened by the prolonged wait, when, in a huge brass bowl, a curious mixture of tinned meats and vegetables was placed steaming before us. Little platters were supplied to each; but out of deference to our host we had, in approved Asiatic fashion, to dip our fingers in and fish up what “tit-bits” we could.

“Ahem!—what is that beautiful golden draught you English pashas drink?” he said, before we had gone far with our meal.

We explained it was "fire-water," and that had been our reason for not asking the good Moslem to partake of it.

"Ah, but you are mistaken; I'm *not* a good Moslem," said he. "I'm a bad one—very bad—I am, indeed; and I think I should like to try a little."

We gave him "a little." He smacked his lips with the air of a connoisseur, and was not long in asking for "a little more." The idea seemed to tickle his fancy immensely.

"We are wrong not to take this," he went on to say. "It looks beautiful, and tastes more beautiful than it looks. To me, it is suggestive of golden sunset; with it, I may close my eyes and dream I'm at the gates of Paradise; I will take more and more still."

But this time we refused, as he had already had two stiff glasses; and to his unaccustomed head it might be dangerous.

Then he explained that, unlike most Turks, he was very fond of music; so would we, as a very great and special favour, give him some idea of the music of Europe? We had none of us, I believe, any great vocal powers, but we indulged him to the best of our abilities.

Holmes, in a fine baritone, sang several snatches of Italian and Spanish airs; Williams was drawn out to the extent that he represented Holland by

Mynheer Van Dunk,
Though he never got drunk,
Took his brandy and water daily,

which was more than could be said of the Major, whose several doses of that spirit were already beginning to tell painfully upon him.

Then Scotland, of course, was worthily represented by the *Scotsman's* special, who sang "Auld Robin Gray" and "The Lass of Gowrie"; and lastly your obedient servant—after singing first "God Save the Queen"—terminated this unique concert with the popular English nursery rhymes of "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle," "Humpty Dumpty," "Tom, Tom, the Piper's



"INKLE TINKLE, ICKLE TAR."

Son," and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," with which we amused our united host and guest so much that he repeatedly endeavoured to catch the airs. Indeed, he threw his whole soul into what he learnt, in a parrot-like way, from Williams.

Laugh? I should think we *did* laugh. The pathetic heroics with which he rendered "Inkle tinkle, ickle tar," merged into one the sublime and the ridiculous; nor shall I easily forget the extraordinary mixture of "Hic iggle diggle, hic caddle figgle," which, after a prolonged and determined effort to master the mysteries of the English tongue, ended, perhaps, in the soundest sleep that inebriated officer had for many a long day enjoyed.

Having slept soundly ourselves, we started early next morning, leaving that merry Major still snoring loudly dreaming, perchance, that he was outside the gates of Paradise, in the light of that golden sunset which he loved, not wisely, but too well.

* * * *

Surely the connecting links between instinct and reason are not easy to detect, so at least we argued, when ascending a narrow precipitous highway, in the course of which we came upon a long heavily-laden camel train. Ere we reached it, however, a strange commotion had taken place.

A pretty, fluffy little camel, the very image of its mother, to whom for protection it had been tied, had slipped on the rough edge, and now dangled over that seemingly fathomless gulf at the other end of the long cord which was attached to the agonised mother's neck. Over and over again it turned, in its frenzied efforts to extricate itself, watched the while by its helpless parents above, whose cries were piteous to listen to. At last, after every scheme to regain it had been tried, it was found necessary to sacrifice it, as there was no possibility of

hauling it up ; and to witness the agonies of those bereaved parents, when the little thing was cut adrift and shot like a dart down to the rocky water-course hundreds of feet below, was simply terrible. One prolonged wail went up from both simultaneously, and it was only with the greatest effort and gentlest persuasion that the camel drivers were able to get the train in motion again.

Indeed, this seemed a morning peculiarly fraught with interest connected with the animal world, since we had not been another hour on the road before we witnessed a buffalo fight, a very rare occurrence, in which always one is, and often both are, killed. It was a desperate encounter, each having gored the other most frightfully before our arrival. This seemed somehow only to give them a renewed incentive for attack ; for, weak as they were, they closed in a final death struggle, ending before long in one measuring his length amongst the blood-stained brambles round about the scene of that terrific conflict.

Now the strange expression and peculiarly characteristic features of one of my guards, as he stood there watching that buffalo fight, no doubt laying mental odds on the issues of the conflict, attracted my attention, and having my note-book in hand I made a rough jotting of his head. Before I had finished he looked up. His aquiline features were unmistakable ; he knew in a moment it was intended for himself. I shall never forget the sudden look of horror and revenge he gave me. For the moment it thrilled me, coming unexpectedly as it did, and, as far as I could see, for no reason. His manner became rapidly sullen and morose, nay more, utterly wretched. If he supposed me possessed of the evil eye, surely he was

possessed of two of the most malignant orbs which ever protruded from human cranium.

Things went on in this mysterious way till I asked Williams if he could throw any light on the matter, when he explained that to be reproduced in any way, on



MELANCHOLY MARKED HIM FOR HER OWN.

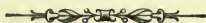
anything, in that superstitious country meant impending death.

The whole thing was explained in a moment. Death, of whom I was the agent, had to all intents and purposes set his seal on my unfortunate follower; a condition of affairs truly terrible to contemplate. "Melancholy" had

indeed "marked him for her own." However, there was no help for it; the thing was done, though his settled gloom affected us all not a little, and no explanation seemed likely to break the spell which he felt hung over him.

Thus we journeyed on our weary way till we came across what was a sort of shepherd's shelter, where, though it looked very uninviting and gloomy, we decided—fearing we might not get quarters of any kind farther afield—on remaining. We had not been long seated round our camp fire when between us and the rays of the declining sun, a troop of some two hundred Arabs, their camels loaded with supplies of all kinds, came at a swinging pace across the undulating uplands, till, with noisy clatter, they halted outside the hut of which we had just fortunately taken possession.

A splendid creature is the Arab camp follower, his ebony skin made doubly black by his huge white ber-nouse, but he is not a reliable neighbour on a dark night, for all that, although there is a compensating balance in his wonderful capacity for story-telling. Thus one who had won his spurs, a past master in the art, was, after the evening meal, selected on this occasion by general acclaim for the office; and I think I cannot do better than conclude this chapter by asking you to join the small circle of interested "Specials" who have closed round my Levantine factotum, Williams, as he translates to them the Arab's legend of "The Beauty of Bagdad."





ON THE TRACK.

CHAPTER VI.

A SLEEPING BEAUTY—DREAMS OF THE FUTURE—SORELY
 TEMPTED—AN EARTHLY PARADISE—UNSCRUPULOUS ARABS
 —A NIGHT ALARM—SAVED BY HIS NOSE—CONSUL BILLIOTTI
 —HOBART PASHA—DANCING ON CAYENNE PEPPER—A
 MUTINY—AN IMPENDING MASSACRE—A FRIEND INDEED—
 THREE DAYS IN OLD ENGLAND—A TERRIBLE FIX—AN ART-
 FUL DODGE—WE TOOK TO TRADE—A GALVANIZED IMPULSE
 —SMASHED TO ATOMS.

IF there is one form of *dolce far niente* more delightful than another it is, I take it, that of being not only under the soothing influence of tobacco but lulled into forgetfulness of the hardships of campaigning by a well-told tale. Williams rose superior to himself when, by general acclaim, he was persuaded to tell the Arab's story of "The Beauty of Bagdad," which he now proceeded to do, introducing as far as possible the peculiarities of diction which give to Eastern romance so peculiar a charm.

* * * *

"I will tell thee, brothers—and you, the white pashas from the green island—the story of Hassan the shepherd, and his daughter, the beauty of Bagdad, the fair Murada, whose loveliness was more dangerous to herself than to those it dazzled.

“It was in the fertile valley of Zagrahani, where the Indian corn sheds its golden glory, where the fig-tree flourishes and the babbling brook glistens in the noon-day sun; it was there that Hassan the shepherd tending his flock, watched also the gambols of his only child, Murada, who, in all the blushing innocence of sixteen summers, was chasing and being chased by a comely youth of about her own age, till fatigued with their madcap frolic they went their several ways—he to the village khan, she to her old father’s side, where ere long she fell fast asleep. Who shall say how proud Hassan was of that sleeping beauty, the living replica of the long-since dead *kotona* he had loved so well?

“There he sat, in a sort of day-dream, picturing what the future of his only child might be, though his wildest ambition did not soar beyond the pastoral delights of his own idyllic life, which had been one of pure love unalloyed by the tinselled and all-too-quickly-tarnished pleasures to be found in great cities and princely palaces.

“His chebouk had gone out; yet Murada still lay there dreaming the happy moments away, her bright golden hair falling in dishevelled masses on his arm—indeed, the old man had almost dozed himself, and probably would have done so, had he not been aroused by the tinkling of camel bells, and the sound of distant voices; all the bustle and commotion, in fact, of an approaching caravan, which, with a bend in the road, now came in sight, slowly toiling along in the direction of Bagdad.

“On arriving at the spot where the two were resting, one of the party, lagging somewhat behind the rest, drew rein that he might feast his eyes on Murada’s loveliness.



“‘Shepherd,’ said he, in an ecstasy of admiration, ‘yonder you see the camel train of my master, laden with rich spices and choice raiments—all these and much more are the property of the merchant prince, the great pasha, to whom we are but as slaves. I would tell thee, O shepherd, that he is as wise and good as he is rich, and that to bask in his smiles is to enjoy a foretaste of Paradise. Therefore would I offer to thy fair daughter a home in his palace near Bagdad, the luxury of which is altogether beyond ordinary human comprehension; besides which, I am authorized to offer to thee, in return, whatever thou mayest desire in money and goods; so that, if thou so willest, thou too may from henceforth become also a rich trader, or settle down to the quiet enjoyment of accumulating wealth in the great bazaar.’

“Then Hassan, gazing fondly on his child, replied that for all the wealth of Asia he would not part with her—not even though the Caliph himself should demand her of him.

“So the stranger went his way, cursing the old man’s folly at thus defying the dictates of *Kismet*, while the shepherd, in happy tranquillity, dozed away by Murada’s side in the quiet enjoyment of their mid-day siesta.

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“Now, how long he slept it is impossible to say; but it was with a strange drowsiness that he awoke, and with something like horror that he discovered it to be night, and that he was alone—yes, alone—besides which, the prevailing aroma of a certain Eastern drug raised in his mind the suspicion, but too well founded, that there had been foul play.

“‘Murada! Murada! Murada!’ his voice resounded through the valley, and re-echoed from the hill-tops. Then the mist was cleared from his eyes, and he saw that, taking advantage of him in his sleep, the insinuating stranger had returned, drugged them both with a subtle herb, and stolen from him his only child. Then the gloom of night crept over those dreary mountains, which still resounded with the old man’s plaint—

“‘Where, oh, where is my Murada?’ and echo answered ‘Where?’

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“Bright and beautiful was the palace of the merchant prince, more especially that portion of it devoted to the ladies of the harem. Persian stuffs of exquisite colour lay in profusion on its marble floor. Curtains from Cashmere screened the too intrusive light which, coming through the stained glass windows, shed its many-tinted tones athwart Moresque columns and cool seductive entries, where fountains played, grey doves cooed, and many-coloured parrots fought for dainty bits of *rahat-lakoum*; everything breathing, in short, of love and luxury, save where jealous eunuchs were to be seen guarding (black sentinels as they were) the fairest flowers in that proud pasha’s palace, all of whom lived only to stand in the sunshine of his smiles.

“All, did I say? No, not all; there was one who held herself aloof from the rest, repelling, with a quiet yet in its way awe-inspiring dignity, the most distant advances of her princely admirer. Indeed, the more she scorned the more he sought her, to the exclusion of all others, till at last, their envy becoming hate, the chief eunuch

was consulted, with the result that she was secretly doomed by those women of the harem to death, to—as they put it in those parts—a cup of black coffee.

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“Now when it was known that the beautiful Murada had fallen a victim to the jealousy of her fair and frail sisters, it was determined that the news should not extend beyond the palace gates, lest the reputation of the pasha himself should be affected ; yet, strange to say, it *did* creep out, even till it reached that far-distant village from which—now two years since—she had been stolen, during which time her poor old father, bereft of reason, had been relegated to the position of village idiot. When, however, all the details of his child’s terrible end one by one fitted themselves together in his puzzled brain, the effect was startling. His vacant stare left him—all the purpose and energy of his earlier life came back to him ; he had become as suddenly sane as he had, two years since, become insane. He lived again ; and all those energies which had so long been dormant now concentrated with renewed force on vengeance. Nothing short of the death of that pasha could now satisfy him, and thus, armed with what weapons he could lay his hands on, he sallied forth determined, even if it took him months to get there, to ultimately make his way to the accursed spot where Murada had breathed her last, and then and there to compass that pasha’s life or perish in the effort.

“Now it so happened that when within two days’ journey of Bagdad, while partaking of the pilaffe supplied to him by a wayside khangee, he was accosted by a wise woman, closely yashmacked, who came from a

gloomy corner of the khan in which he was ; seating herself on the ground before him, she pierced him through and through with her bead-like eyes. She was a diviner, a witch, who knew at a glance the inmost secrets of his wounded heart.

“ ‘Would you satisfy your craving ?’ said she, with a fiendish chuckle, as she drew closer to him. ‘Would you punish the murderers of your child—would you cast a death-spell on the great pasha, his eunuchs and his wives, who have taken from you your beautiful Murada ? Would you see Boabdil, he who supplied the poison, laid lifeless at your feet ? Would you bring that proud pasha himself a suppliant for mercy before you—would you, I say, enjoy all the exquisite delight of vengeance—of hate, gratified ? If so, then drink of the contents of this bottle. Drink ! I say, to the dregs, that by its magic influence a curse may fall on her destroyers.’

“Then Hassan, with a look of supreme satisfaction, took the small vial from the sorceress, and drained it to the dregs.

“It was *Kismet* ; revenge was his.

“Without uttering a word the old man fell to the ground, sinking back in the corner of the khan in a state of complete collapse. Then a peculiar settled, meaningless glare came into his eyes ; his cheeks grew livid, a momentary tremor, and then—then all was still. Hassan was dead ; poisoned by one of Boabdil’s, the chief eunuch’s, agents. He had heard of his approach, and sent his hireling, the witch, to intercept and poison the heart-broken father of the murdered girl.”

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There had been a pause, a thrill of excitement amongst that wild Arab audience when the story-teller finished his pathetic tale ; but the sequel had yet to come.

"Listen," said he, rising to his feet ; "I have yet a few more words to say.

"Hassan awoke.

"His chebouk lay by his side, his child was still sleeping soundly in the folds of his long garment.

"It was a dream. Two hours only, and not two years, had passed.

"The caravan—the enamoured stranger—the powerful pasha—the jealous wives—Boabdil the eunuch, and the witch, had existed only in Hassan's fertile brain, which I," continued the Arab story-teller, "can at least vouch for, since *I am myself Hassan the dreamer*, whose daughter Murada—thanks be to Allah—is now the sunshine of a happy home, the faithful wife of the young shepherd to whom I introduced you at the commencement of this story."

Williams, identifying himself throughout with the manner and gesticulation of the Arab, translated the story admirably, sustaining the interest so well that its ultimate end came upon us all as a surprise.

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He is not a pleasant neighbour, your Arab, on a dark night though, however fascinating he may be in other respects ; so, as we were surrounded, I gave, at sundown, special orders that no communication of any sort should be opened up with the swarthy horde outside our hut. Indeed, so particular was I with reference to this, that I said it should be death to anyone who disobeyed my in-

structions by leaving or coming into the place after dark ; having, at the same time, peculiar feelings of discomfort and misgiving with reference to Suleiman, who was still as savage and silent as before.

These necessary threats having been circulated, each retired into the driest corner he could discover "to sleep, perchance to dream" of Arab murderers looking for loot.

After lying awake listening for some time, to make quite sure all was safe, I must have dropped off to sleep, for it was some time in the small hours when I was suddenly awakened by a strange stealthy tread, accompanied by the mysterious creaking noise which had evidently been the cause of my awakening.

I raised myself noiselessly upon my elbow, and saw in the otherwise pitch-dark hut what seemed to me to be a long perpendicular streak of silver.

Did my eyes deceive me ? I rubbed them, to be perfectly sure I was not still asleep and dreaming.

No ! I was right. The streak of silver light became gradually broader and broader, till the figure of a man, black against the moonlight, stood peering into the interior.

For the moment I could scarcely breathe for excitement. What was the best step to take ? Should I wake the others ? No ; there was no time for that. I must take the initiative, or we should probably all be murdered where we lay.

Silently I turned, unseen by the intruder, and levelled my revolver point-blank at his head, knowing as I did, our very lives depended on it, since an entry from without would undoubtedly mean death to us, so awaiting my

opportunity, I raised the trigger higher and higher ; the inevitable click would seal his fate—his time had come.

I was so over-wrought at that critical moment that I verily believe I was totally destitute of all ordinary feeling ; but, fortunately, at the instant I was about to fire the man turned, and there—black and sharply defined against the moonlight—stood out the remarkable and



SAVED BY HIS NOSE.

utterly unmistakable features of my faithful Johannes, who in another second would have been in eternity—to all intents and purposes saved by his nose !

How simple a mistake after all. Worn out with the fatigue of the day, he had been asleep when our plan of action with reference to those dangerous outsiders was settled, and having awoke in the middle of the night, had gone outside the hut to smoke a cigarette in the cooler open. I had not heard him remove the log we had placed against the door, hence the imminent peril in

which he—without knowing it—had been ; however, he never realised it, for I never informed him.

As Fate would have it, the next morning I was inspired with a bright idea, which immediately relieved me from further anxiety with reference to Suleiman, whose moroseness had become perfectly insufferable.

Calling him, I explained, through the medium of the invaluable Williams, that I possessed a *magic* antidote to



THE ANTIDOTE.

the lines of that fatal pencil, by means of which in an unhappy moment I had made a sketch of him, with which he himself might, by passing it rapidly over the paper, obliterate the evil for ever and thus break the spell.

The effect of this suggestion was marvellous ; his face instantly lit up with inexpressible delight ; at first he took hold of the india-rubber with the tips of his fingers,



NEWS FROM THE FRONT.

in the tenderest possible manner, but on realising its miraculous qualities he rubbed absolutely for dear life.

Bred and born in a remote part of Anatolia, Suleiman had never even heard of *india-rubber*. The picture vanished. He smiled again, and so did we.

Time went on, and though we sent batches of subjects and MS. from time to time back to the old country, days and nights succeeded one another without more than ordinary every-day incidents, till we reached Trebizond.

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Oh ! how delightfully welcome was the fresh sea air, the comparative cleanliness, the kindly reception from Consul Billiotti and, to us, the palatial luxury of that little hotel where five months ago Schamyl had interviewed us, or we Schamyl (we never could decide that point), who now, poor fellow, had found a soldier's grave in the neighbourhood of Kars. We were immediately beset and surrounded by crowds of people, all talking at once in their eagerness to know how things were going on at the front ; and I think, had not the Consul promised that the news we brought should be circulated directly he obtained it, we should have been absolutely mobbed.

Williams on these occasions was always to the fore. Taking advantage of the confusion of tongues of which he was master, nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to ride on a little in advance of our party, assuring the natives in the towns and villages we passed through that those infidels who had not found a watery grave, by being driven *en masse* into the Black Sea, had long since beat an ignominious retreat inland, the quiet dignity

with which he told his flattering tale always paving the way, as far as we were concerned, for a right royal reception wherever we went. True, it was not based on the strictest integrity, though it probably afforded them a better night's rest than they had for some considerable time enjoyed.

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At this time Hobart Pasha's ironclads were busy in the Black Sea, blockading ports and striking terror generally into the ranks of the entrenched Russians on the coast; so, when his flagship put in an appearance in the roadstead, I lost no time in paying a visit to the admiral before my departure for Constantinople.

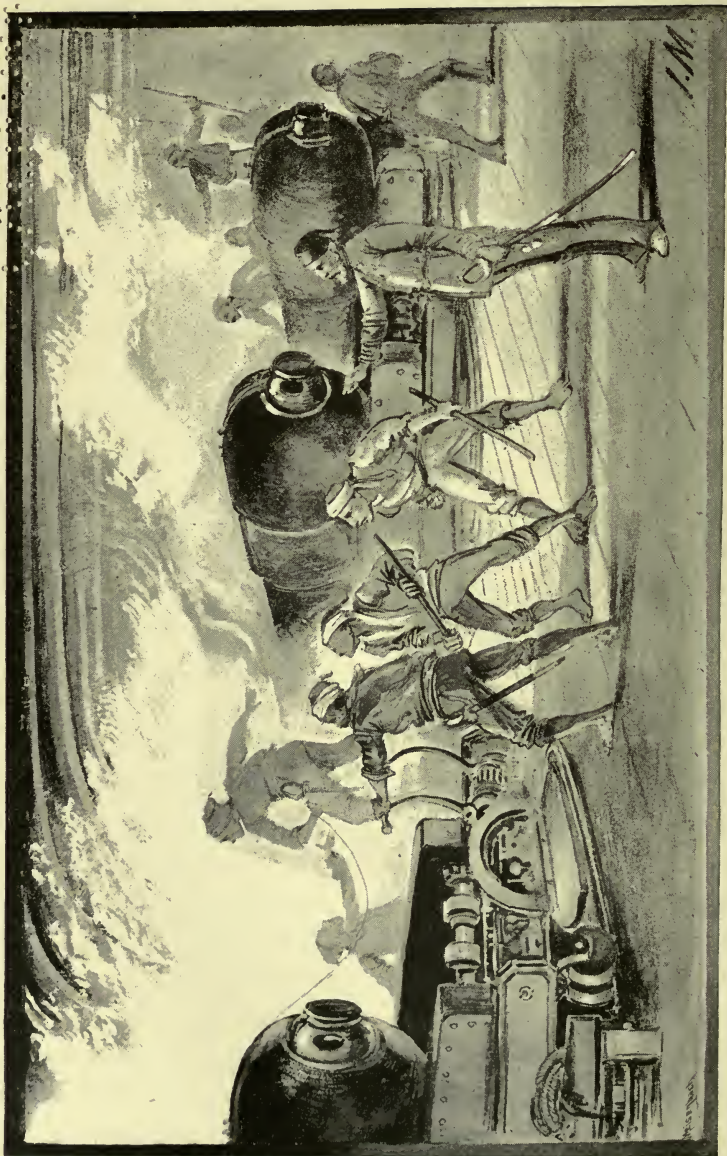
On arriving on board I was most cordially received by one of his officers, who spoke excellent English, and who preceded me to the great commander's cabin.

"Come in," said a stentorian voice, and the next moment I was inside his unpretentious sanctum.

"How are you, Montagu? Well, I hope. Eh? Take the *Times*. Comparatively recent; at least, only two months old. Rather a treat, I should say, after being up country. Read it, and don't say a word till I've finished these despatches."

The sight of so late an edition of an English newspaper was strangely fascinating, and for ten minutes or more the only sound to be heard was that of Hobart's pen running riot over much official-looking paper. Having closed and sealed his correspondence, he rose, and shaking me cordially by the hand said, in the bluff, honest manner so peculiar to him—

"Going to have tea. Have some, too? Took two



TWEEN DECKS ON A TURKISH IRONCLAD.

Russian prisoners the other day near Batoum—two cows ; so I've got new milk to offer you. A rare luxury on board ship, I can tell you."

With this he led the way into a sort of ante-cabin, where I did full justice to the Admiral's hospitality. Afterwards, when on deck he called my attention to a number of small sacks containing a red powder.

"What do you think that is, eh?"

I mildly suggested it might be a preparation of dynamite.

"Dynamite! Oh, no; more unpleasant than dangerous. No; it's cayenne pepper—a reminiscence of my boyhood. I remember throwing it about in a ball-room with signal effect. A ludicrously touching scene, I can assure you. In frantic excitement, and torrents of tears, the guests rushed from the room; it was too hot for 'em. Hence *this* idea; I find that by mixing a fair proportion of it with powder, I can clear a redoubt in a moment. I've been doing it with marked effect on the Russian earthworks. When there is little wind the redoubts become quite untenable for hours."

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Having no time to lose, and being obliged to push forward, a few days later we found ourselves on board an Austrian-Lloyd's steamer on our way to Constantinople. The passage was a very rough one, made more memorable by an attempt at mutiny on the part of a large number of deserters (about 300), who were being taken under a small and useless escort to the capital. One of their number—an excellent swimmer—suddenly leapt overboard at Sinope, and succeeded in getting to shore. This seemed a signal for general revolt, passen-

gers and crew having to stand to their arms pretty promptly, or numbers might have told against them.

It was a strange experience, and by no means a pleasant one; our ultimate safety was, I think, really due to the



COOL AS A CUCUMBER.

prompt action of the second officer, who, in less than no time, drew a rope in such a way across the deck as to confine the infuriated mob to the bows of the vessel; and then he himself standing calmly in front of it with a huge revolver, assured them, as he waited for developments, that the



HOBART PASHA.

first man who attempted to pass or break that rope would be shot. Naturally, there was no striving to be first ; each immediately affording his neighbour ample opportunity for taking the field, trembling lest he himself should, by some accident be swayed beyond the prescribed limits, the muzzle of that revolver travelling backward and forward in front of those now cowed prisoners.

That journey, however, was memorable for something far more momentous than this, since at one time not only did we lose our way for many hours in a dense fog, which compelled us to travel at the most melancholy rate of quarter-speed, but, to add to the painful predicament, a panic was created when it became generally known that the coast-line of the Black Sea was literally intersected by torpedoes, so that at any moment we might be blown into space. Fire is a new element to the sailor of the mercantile marine, and in this case seemed more calculated to completely demoralize him than all the storms in the world.

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It was a delicious morning when we reached Constantinople ; but its charms were lost on me, since the complaint, erythema, which had so nearly left this chronicle unpublished had again asserted itself, and it was with great difficulty I could crawl from place to place. So, assisted by Williams, who this time secured rooms in a private residence instead of an hotel, I was glad enough to at last look forward to a little rest. The house was kept by an old lady and her daughter, and was delightfully situated in the Kutchuk Majarlic, overlooking the Golden Horn.

With a great effort, and much assistance, I managed to get up to my bed-room, where afterwards every kindness and attention was shown me. The Greek doctor who was called in shook his head gravely with an air of profound professional wisdom as—much to my dismay—he told me (his hands in his pockets the while chinking in sweet imagery the coin his prodigiously long bill would bring him in) that I must remain several months, at least, where I was.

The second day after my arrival, Pera was the scene of great excitement, the inmates of the house rushing into my room in the wildest state of terror. The *softas* (students) had threatened to massacre the Christian population. As day merged into night, the anxiety and tension became terrible. In justice to the Turkish Government, it may be said that patrols were sent round to discover, if possible, the scheme by which simultaneous attacks were to be made, but this did little to reassure the terror-stricken Christians, amongst whom, being Greeks, were my landlady, Madame Diamantes, and her daughter. Houses were closed and barricaded as if in anticipation of a siege, the streets being left in sole possession of the dogs, who, unmoved by religious, political, or any other agitation, slept in peace.

In my room were to be found a curious medley—for it seemed they had a sort of vague idea that an English war-correspondent (even though he had not a leg to stand upon) was a rock to which to cling. Had not the circumstances been so terribly serious, the scene would have been ludicrous, as several Greeks residing in Turkish houses had fled to this one for that security which numbers

seemed to afford, and had made my room their rendezvous. All the weapons available, in the shape of revolvers, &c., were laid on my table ready for an emergency, while coming Christian martyrs, in some cases of most unpoetic aspect, watched from the windows the Turkish troops defiling below.

All night were these poor creatures alternately watching and praying, till, at daybreak, the loud booming of



TERRIBLE SUSPENSE.

cannon was heard; and although it was illogical to suppose that the *softas* had suddenly possessed themselves of the artillery, it was impossible to reason with or reassure those terrorized people, who naturally could only suppose that the massacre had commenced, and the scenes of anguish around me were in some cases frightful. Several

hours having passed, however, and nothing more having happened, they became at last somewhat toned down, and sufficiently quieted to inquire into what was really going on outside, when, after several reports of fearful bloodshed, it was ascertained beyond doubt that it was the Sultan's birthday, and the booming we heard was the salute of 101 guns to announce its dawning, those anticipated horrors coming to nothing after all.

Having had a fair share of the regrets and separations which flesh is heir to, I remember few partings which have affected me more than when, on the steamer which was to take me to Brindisi, I was obliged to separate from my faithful dragoman Williams.

He had been to me a jewel beyond price, a man of the highest principles and most admirable resources, combining the courage of a lion with the gentleness of a lamb, and so completely devoted to myself and my interests that, as he went down the ship's ladder into the caique which awaited him below, he broke down altogether, and (tell it not in Gath, reader), if the truth must be known, so did I.

He was one of nature's gentlemen, whose services had been far beyond the reach of ordinary recompense. A happy thought struck me as the caiqueges put their paddles in motion. My watch, with my initials on it, would be in some sense a souvenir of our friendship; so in a twinkling I dropped it overboard, almost on his devoted head. He caught it, however, and glad was I to leave it as a memento behind me with one who had been so faithful a friend and ally.

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After a rapid run from Constantinople to Brindisi, and thence overland *viâ* Turin and Paris to London, I may briefly say that I was still so knocked up by the combined effects of constant chills, starvation, bad water, and the many other privations of the campaign in Asia Minor, that on my arrival at Charing Cross I had to go



"FAREWELL."

direct to my cottage at Hampstead, where—so changed was I, that actually my old housekeeper failed to recognise me. Ill, haggard, and unshaven, a beard of large growth having nearly taken possession of my visage, her failing to know me was not altogether astonishing. After about twenty-four hours' rest at home, however, I man-

aged to get down to the *Illustrated London News* office, to report myself and receive my further instructions, which were—and they took me rather by surprise—to start *that evening* for Plevna.

It was then about three o'clock, and although it was supposed I was too knocked up, too utterly unequal to this new effort, still a certain professional desire seized me to be the one war artist who had done the *double event*—the two campaigns, Europe and Asia Minor—and I was determined, come what might, to go; and so, sending a telegram, of which the following is a copy and which will give some idea of the rapidly shifting scenes of a correspondent's life at such stirring times, I prepared to start.

Handed in Strand, September 25th 1877, &c., &c.

I join the Russians to-night; meet me at Bertolini's at five thirty; bring black portmanteau, rug, cards, passport, revolver, great coat, flask, and pipe.

Joined by these *old friends* in due course, and arranging a hasty equipment of necessaries in the immediate neighbourhood of Charing Cross, I left by the eight o'clock continental train for the seat of war. It was a halting progress, however; for I broke down completely when I got to Paris, and had again to lay up for some hours when I arrived in Vienna—where, by the way, I found my heavier luggage, which, when I ran the gauntlet of the Russians at Giurgevo in the beginning of the campaign, I had left behind me in that capital. After several hours' rest I found myself just able to make the last lap, which brought me through my old Hungarian and Servian hunting grounds once more to Bucharest.

Now, in this regularly Russified city, my first object was to put myself into communication with Prince Gortschakoff, that under the ægis of that great *diplomat* I might get to the front with as little delay as possible. I was most courteously received, specially by his Excellency's secretary, Baron Jomini; but, to my consternation, the reception ended in pleasantries only. I was assured that it was utterly impossible to get a permit to join the army of occupation in Bulgaria; and, as if to add to the difficulties of my dilemma, I was told at the same time that, owing to the anticipation in several cases by correspondents of *intended* Russian movements, representatives of the press of all nationalities had been ordered to the rear, so that *I* must consider *myself* to all intents and purposes as being limited in my field of action to Bucharest itself.

I kept my own counsel, however, and although these arrangements, no doubt, were most necessary from a diplomatic point of view, I privately made up my mind that this should not affect *my* movements if, humanly speaking, I could prevent it. This place, for the second time in the same campaign, had curiously enough thus become the point I had to force.

With Coningsby, the *Times* correspondent, I talked the matter over that evening, he being in exactly the same predicament; the result of our council of war was that we decided to get through to the front, if possible, disguised as *camp-followers*. The best that could happen to us would be—that we should succeed; the worst—that we should (having at least done our best) be sent to St. Petersburg till the end of the war.

With this object in view we were not long in purchasing a waggon of large dimensions, and stocking it with every imaginable kind of provender, from tinned salmon to tallow candles. This done, we proceeded to rig *ourselves* up in, I may say, such perfect disguise that we scarcely recognized one another; we secured servants, including a driver, and thus we started—as camp-followers—for Plevna.

Sending on the waggon in advance, to await us at Zimnitza, we started by rail for Giurgevo on the Danube. Here again another obstacle cropped up, the train being brought to a standstill some distance outside that place owing to the station at that time being under the shell fire of the Turks from the forts of Rustchuk. They had opened fire on the train which had arrived previously to ours—its smoke serving as a point on which to sight, the Osmanlis thus pounding away from those batteries opposite, of which I had a peculiarly sensitive memory in connection with my previous crossing.

Now in this train, on their way to Plevna, were Colonel Brackenbury and, I think, Sir Henry Havelock. I had met the latter just before leaving Bucharest, and I believe he told me they were going together. Be this as it may, I afterwards heard they left their portman-teaus in charge of their respective dragomen, and went in quest of refreshments a little way into the town. Those dragomen in turn (hungry as their masters) gave the temporary care of their baggage to a couple of soldiers off duty, who for a few kopecks were glad to represent them, and it was during their absence that a shell burst through the roof of the railway station, and exploding

on the exact spot where these unhappy guards stood, not only killed them simultaneously, but smashed the portmanteaus and their contents to pieces—but more on this subject anon.

Coningsby and myself, arriving late—slept one night in Giurgevo—securing for an early hour the next morning a three-horse drosky to take us to Zimmnitza. It was curious to note the siege panic which had now for some time taken possession of the town. Visiting several familiar spots, notably that little water-side inn where the crossing of the Danube was discussed by the Russian spy and myself, I found it a heap of splintered, shattered ruins. Giurgevo had evidently suffered severely, several shells having also done their work most strangely; for instance, one had entered the roof of a house almost at an angle of 45° to its base, and after having traversed the floor and ceiling of every room in succession had finished its mad career in the garden, where it had harmlessly exploded, the detonator having been in some way so faulty, that although the whole household were scared no harm was done to any one.

Indeed, this had happened in the very bed-room in which I spent that night in Giurgevo, a shell having previously come through the roof of that room and out of an open window into a yard below, where it did much havoc amongst the pigs and poultry. I was amusingly assured by the old self-constituted landlady, who for protection had taken up her quarters in the wine cellar (not half a bad billet, by the way), that *mine* was the safest room in the house, since it was highly improbable that yet another shell would penetrate the same spot; and though the hole

in the roof made it rather draughty, there was little danger of my being disturbed. I put her down as the most admirable lodging-letter but, at the same time, the most utterly illogical old creature I had ever met.

She had, in the palmy days of this hotel, been one of its cooks, the master of which had now fled for dear



“MOTHER.”

life, while she, in conjunction with her son, an oily, scared-looking youth who did duty as waiter, was running the establishment on her [own] account, and supplying, at exorbitant prices, the few Russian officers, correspondents, and others who found it necessary to stop there in passing.

Loquacity itself, she again assured me, in the same queer, illogical way, that had not that idiot of a son of

hers left the window open in my room the hole would have never been made in the roof. It is quite impossible to argue against the upside-down notions of some people.

From an idiotic point of view, I think that galvanized impulse of a son had not his equal in all Roumania; a



A GALVANIZED IMPULSE.

tale of terror was told by every line in his prematurely furrowed face. He started at shadows, and trembled like an aspen at any sound much above a whisper; his fear was positively appalling. At dinner it was absolutely dreadful; he put one in a state of spasmodic jerks, which, if nothing worse, were calculated to completely upset one's digestion. When he brought in the soup that night, it

was at a most unfortunate moment. The wind happened to blow down a ladder which was propped against the house in the yard outside; at the same instant, the two soup plates went in diametrically opposite directions, the waiter forming a spreadeagle in the centre. Poor wretch! he was in a chronic state of shells, and fell flat at the slightest suspicion of a sudden noise. War had, indeed, so upset him that even the maternal influence failed to persuade him to further supply us with dinner, so we finished by going to the top of those cellar stairs and fetching what we could for our selves.

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It was a delightfully clear, crisp autumn morning. Jingle, jingle, jingle went the drosky bells, as three very fresh horses clattered over the stones of the stable-yard round to the front door of that half-demolished hotel, where we awaited them.

Our portmanteaus being carefully packed behind our seats, we jumped in. If it had not been for the *débris* of war, by which we were surrounded on every side in that be-shelled little place, we might have felt at peace with the world as we lit our matutinal cigars and rattled along its main street, past the shattered railway-station out into the open, on our way to Zimnitza.

"Now it's not so much the disguise," a clever London detective once said, "as *when, where, and how* you wear it;" and so we thought, from the moment Baron Jomini assured us we were to consider ourselves virtually prisoners in Bucharest. Thus we left that place, unobserved, as camp-followers. Such individuals however, in a three-horse drosky would have invited dangerous criti-

cism, so we now covered our less pretentious costumes with huge fur-lined great-coats and muffin-shaped caps, thus becoming part and parcel of the great tide of fighting humanity ever ebbing and flowing between the Roumanian side of the Danube and Plevna.

That which was our best protection in one place would in another have been the very means of our discovery; thus we now appeared in the *rôle* of officers going to the



SHELLED.

front, while elsewhere the homely garb of camp-follower might better answer our purpose in getting through the many intermediate barriers of steel now daily contracting on devoted Plevna; but I anticipate.

We had not long cleared the town, when it became manifest that we had attracted more attention from the gunners at the Turkish outworks at Rustchuk than we

either desired or deserved. Our route for some distance skirted the river's bank, where we were in full view of those forts which, it will be remembered, menaced me once before in the earlier stages of this narrative, when in an open boat I found myself approaching that Moslem town.

Wondering, like Mr. Micawber, what would turn up, our cogitations were brought to an alarming standstill by an ominously sullen roar from across the water, immediately followed by the deafening bursting of a shell in some underwood a little to our rear. We had evidently been spotted and, without some miraculous intervention, we should be made mincemeat of when their sighting became more accurate. Another shell followed, wider, however, of the mark than the first, which, though it served to increase the terror of our now half-frantic horses, gave us renewed confidence.

Plunging and rearing as they did, those startled steeds gave the Turks the opportunity they wanted, for in less time than it takes to describe, the uncanny screech of yet another shell terminated in a third crash, so close that even now I shudder when I think of it. All for a moment seemed chaotic confusion, and then——



CHAPTER VII.

LIVELY LATITUDES—A LOVELY DANSEUSE—"DOWN AMONGST THE DEAD MEN"—THAT HISTORIC BRIDGE—MCGHAN'S DINNER PARTY—MOUNTAINS OF MUD—WITH THE IMPERIAL GUARD—FIRE OR WATER—WE TOOK TO TRADE— "A TRAMP ABROAD"—CAMP-FIRE STORIES—MUSIC HATH CHARMS.

It has been said that in extreme cases the marrow freezes, and that each particular hair which doesn't stand on end like the quills of the fretful porcupine turns white as driven snow. Surely circumstances would have justified this, since no predicament could well have been worse than that in which we were now placed. Our horses were utterly scared and unmanageable, so helplessly mixed and entangled that some moments elapsed before we were again on the way. Our stoppage had evidently given those gunners a steadier aim—another all-too-familiar boom—a prolonged screech—and then the crash of a shell, which seemed to lift us from our seats and throw us and our already terrified steeds into, if possible, greater confusion than before.

This last shot had the effect of so startling the horses that they dashed off in headlong flight, taking us provi-

dentially round a corner, and so out of sight of the enemy; but the most curious part of the story has yet to come.

Arrived at Zimnitza, we decided on remaining there for the night, and crossing the following morning, over the now historic bridge of boats, into Bulgaria. This being the case, I went in quest of some necessaries from my portmanteau, which had served as a back to my seat in the drosky. Imagine my astonishment when I found it torn from end to end, and its contents twisted into a conglomerate mass within. No wonder I sank back as I have described, at the moment of that terrific shock, the cause of which was now all too apparent. The shell had struck home *rather* closer than I, at the time, had any notion of, my life having been saved by that well-packed valise.

On examining matters more minutely, I discovered a splinter of the shell had struck it obliquely, without touching the drosky itself. One side was in ribbons—leather, straps, and buckles being mixed in picturesque confusion, with broken brushes, flannel shirts, smashed pots of Liebig's essence of meat, and broken bottles of Dr. Collis Browne's chlorodyne—indeed, that smashed portmanteau is still in evidence, a household god, enshrined as a memento of yet another providential escape.

At Zimnitza we found ourselves in the thick of the excitement which characterizes the fringe of war—indeed, I don't remember, in a long experience, anything so unique as the aspect of that little Roumanian town.

To begin with, from the heavy rains and recent overflow of the Danube, we found ourselves and horses in many places knee-deep in mud, besides which the place was, as

Pat would put it, "Not itself at all—at all," since an army of Jewish and other sutlers had pitched tents innumerable round about and in and out its few irregular streets. Bell tents, square tents, long tents, tall tents rose before one, like the towers of Babel which they were. Then there were squat tents built over deep holes cut well down into mother earth, together with others of every imaginable colour and shape, while towering above all was a mountain of canvas, in the shape of a huge circular tent, which loomed down like a giant amongst pigmies on the rest of those canvas dwellings. Such, when we arrived, was the aspect of poor little Zimnitza; it had quite lost its own identity.

There, too, at this time, were to be found camp-followers of every imaginable kind and nationality, determined (as my friend the spy at Giurgevo had put it) "to make hay while the wind blew." In this canvas land, curiously, there were few things, indeed, unobtainable—that is, so long as filthy lucre was abundantly forthcoming; and certainly with Russian officers there seemed no stint of it.

Before crossing the Danube by the pontoons, which, thrown from island to island linked us with Bulgaria opposite, many things took place which necessitated delay, and which would have been fatal to pockets not very well lined. Verily, a queer place this!

Take, for example, the main street; here are some mud steps leading down into a cavernous-looking square hole, say 25 by 20 feet, over which a large tent awning is tightly fitted; much merriment is going on here amongst those who are not eating. It is not so ill lit an apartment,

after all, for the great square canvas stretched over it seems to throw a soft lantern light into the interior. Outside the entrance, rudely written in tar, on a whitened board, are the words "Hotel Victoria," and below a long list of the goods obtainable therein. Opposite, is a rival establishment of a similar description, the "Restaurant de l'Empereur."

Here is a tobacconist's, and over there a dram-drinking saloon, where anything in the shape of a nip, from vodka and raki to Scotch or Irish whisky and champagne, may—at fabulous prices, of course—be had.

Yes, we are on our way to the front! Ay, and who can tell—it is more than possible we may never return. So let them "make hay while the sun shines," and let us be merry while we can. Once across that bridge of boats, and we shall have other tales to tell.

How is this? Officers, non-commissioned officers, men—aye and women, too!—*all* are hurrying round canvas corners, in one, direction, down the main street of this queer conglomerate of tents and huts. Outside the great round tent of which I have spoken a huge bell is jingling loudly from a pole. What can all the commotion mean? Are the faithful Muscovites off to prayer? Is it a summons to kirk?

Alas! no; it is the performances at the "Cirque de la Guerre" which that bell is proclaiming. The charges are as high as the performances are doubtful; nevertheless, the enterprising managers have thought it worth while to bring several veritable spotted circus horses with them, to say nothing of acrobats and trapezists, and a Mr. Merryman, got up as a burlesque Turk, whose antics

in the ring produce from time to time roars of laughter. Then there is our *old* friend (oh! yes, I am right in saying *old*) the *young* lady, whose step is not so elastic as it used to be, and with whom whitening and rouge do much



KATINKA.

towards the outward seeming of youth, as she trips it on a bare-backed steed, to the tune of several French horns and a fiddle, while that bony high-stepper goes at a circus jog-trot round the ring.

Poor *old* girl ! her day has passed ; her blandishments are over. She now serves only as padding to the better things which come between ; for here we have, in a perfect shower of applause, "La Belle de la Guerre" Katinka, a lovely little *danseuse*, who whisks about with wondrous rapidity on a frisky arab, and who is, in turn, followed by the obstinate donkey which no one but Mr. Merryman can ride. These are succeeded by the giant and the dwarf, the hairy woman (with a strong suspicion of Calmuc Tartar camp-follower about her), and no end of fun besides, much to the pleasure and intense amusement of big muffin-capped and helmeted Russians, who, like school-boys at a pantomime, roar at all they see, and who, equally like school-boys, feeling how brief is their holiday, determine, come what may, to enjoy it to the full before they go back again to that humdrum school-of-arms to practise—killing.

Strong drinks ? Oh, yes, they were tremendously in demand in this strange settlement ; and no wonder, since the water of the Danube was our only alternative, which at this time was literally weak mud, through which it was impossible to see.

Those sutlers were ever wide awake to turn an honest penny, and amongst other things they let furnished and unfurnished apartments. These lodgings were so conveniently constructed that they brought them in no end of dollars for some considerable time for the purposes of the Quick, after which they could, if required, become the freehold of the Dead. The design was simple ; to all intents and purposes they were common graves, some four feet wide by eight long, dug the usual depth in the

clayey soil, the sides battened hard by the digger's shovel, a piece of old carpet or some straw, laid at the bottom, answering the purposes of mattress, palliasse, and feather bed alike. The opening, save where the space was left for the weary one to descend by a ladder, was generally roofed



APARTMENTS TO LET.

with brambles or canvas, which in turn were soon covered by mud or snow.

So much for the *unfurnished* apartment; those which were furnished, and let at a considerably higher rental, differed in this fact only, that they had three or four boards of the grave-digger type to line them and prevent the damp earth from giving a death-like chill to one's

marrow, and to impart to those quarters a more *homely* and comfortable character. I paid 20 francs for one of these the night of my arrival at Zimnitza, and thankful I was to get it, since when I ventured to suggest that the terms were slightly excessive I was assured that, had it been snowing or raining, they would have been considerably higher; indeed, only the night before, a brigadier had paid 32 francs for the same accommodation, and had thought himself fortunate too. However, grave or no grave, we slept soundly enough, and woke up the following morning as fresh as circumstances would admit of, to continue our journey to Plevna.

Imagine if you can a low-lying pontoon bridge, say four times the length of London Bridge, stretching from one island to another, and then—in one long line across the Danube to the picturesque Bulgarian town of Sistova opposite, where trim white houses, with green shutters, snowy mosques, minarets, and luxuriant foliage combine to make a picture worth remembering.

See the hurry, scurry, jostle, and confusion that continually presses onward either to the front or to the rear, one everlasting stream of winter stores going to or coming from the Turkish side. Now the bridge is one blaze of bayonets, glittering in the morning sun. Then hay-carts in dozens, provision waggons, ambulance stores, and batteries, follow in quick succession. Ox teams block the way in one part, while impetuous drivers of four-in-hand arabas yell, hoot, and scream themselves hoarse, as Cossack drivers prod their cattle to a quicker pace with long steel-pointed ox-goads to make way for them.

Again, the other way come long irregular lines of

Turkish prisoners, smoking the cigarettes supplied them by their Muscovite captors, and looking as philosophical as possible under the circumstances; next comes a rumbling ambulance, with small red crosses on its lamps and big ones on its tarpaulin sides. Here are messengers bringing all sorts of news, to all sorts of people, from all sorts of places. In short, it is War—war everywhere, in whatever direction we look, and we see and feel that we are in the thick of those great events which will make a special page in the history of the nineteenth century.

Yes, there is something about that bridge of boats which goes deeper than the surface—it is the bloody link between Christianity and Moslemism—it is the great bolt in the chain of events which connect the Crescent and the Cross in deadly strife; and if it be terrible by *day*, how far more terrible is it at *night* (for this work goes on without one moment's intermission throughout the twenty-four hours), how far more terrible then—when lighted with innumerable lamps, it looks like some fiery-spotted snake, wriggling and swaying as those heavy burdens cross its back. Then, too, though the traffic continues, all is, as if by common consent, quieter, an occasional groan emphasizing the scene with a touch of terrible pathos, as some poor wounded fellow cries out in his agony, as he is being carted away in a requisitioned Bulgarian bullock-waggon across that so lately disputed boundary, to the hospital at Zimnitsa.

Next will pass a troop of Cossacks. Well do I remember, as I stood there alone in the darkness, watching that ever-shifting stream of humanity; it looked, for all the world, like some grim procession of lost spirits cross-

sing the Styx, accompanied, as it was, by the hoarse hooting and yelling of brutal drivers, and the piteous moans of those agonized by pain. Yes, if it is possible to imagine it, it was like a weird vision of the Inferno, as those great dense clouds, scudding fitfully across the moon, threw the worried earth below alternately into sickly relief or inky darkness.

The ordinarily charming little town of Sistova was not by any means in good form when we reached it. Its



CAMPHORATED HEROES.

houses were shelled and dismantled, the Turkish quarter having been completely looted and gutted after the retreat by the Bulgarians; even the mosques were desecrated. Its hospitals were overcrowded, the dead and dying in many cases being relegated to half-ruined private houses and empty shops; and when one remembers that no less than 22,000 draught horses were actually done to death by over-exertion and mud, apart from those killed in

battle, and there lay decomposing in the open between us and Plevna, it can be easily imagined that in a place where, at the best of times, drainage was conspicuous by its absence, the stench was frightful.

Indeed, in some cases the place assumed quite a grotesque aspect, which even impending fever could not dispel, since officers, men, and correspondents alike, when it was exceptionally unbearable, tied camphor bags to their noses by means of handkerchiefs which they fastened round their heads, and which gave them the curious appearance of a great array of warriors with the toothache.

It was at Sistova I last saw poor McGhan of the *Daily News*, who died, it will be remembered, not long afterwards at Constantinople. He gave Grant, Coningsby and myself a little surprise one evening.

Millet and he had conceived the idea of sending us formal invitations to a dinner party which would have done credit to Mayfair, with, however, a comical little postscript in the corner as follows: "Special dessert will be provided." The hut which they had, had been specially swept out by McGhan's man for the occasion; in fact, a general clear-up had been gone through for our reception.

It was a wonderful arrangement. An old newspaper did duty for a table-cloth, on a dummy table improvised by a packing-case turned upside down. The salt-cellars were the paper cocked hats beloved of our childhood, duly placed at the respective corners of that festive board; paper napkins were also provided.

At this distant date, I forget what the *very* *doubtful good cheer was; but it was, I am sure, the best that could be procured. Then came the great secret, "special

dessert." A square tin box was produced, and in dead silence placed in the middle of the table; it contained about two ounces of—well what? Why, of all luxuries in life, British bird's-eye, which to smokers who had long ceased even to dream of such a thing was a treat indeed. It had been, I understood, a little present from a Russian officer, which that most kindly fellow, and best and ablest of correspondents, wished us to share.

I remember, too, there was an amusing Yankee general in Sistova while I was there. Whether he was deputed to watch the war for his country or not, I do not know; he was at least a man full of "wise saws and modern instances."

One day I made some reference to the clumsy and long-drawn-out way in which Russian guns were taken up to the front. True, the roads were frightful, the mud being simply beyond all description, but still I ventured to suggest that the progress of that artillery was in many instances lamentably slow.

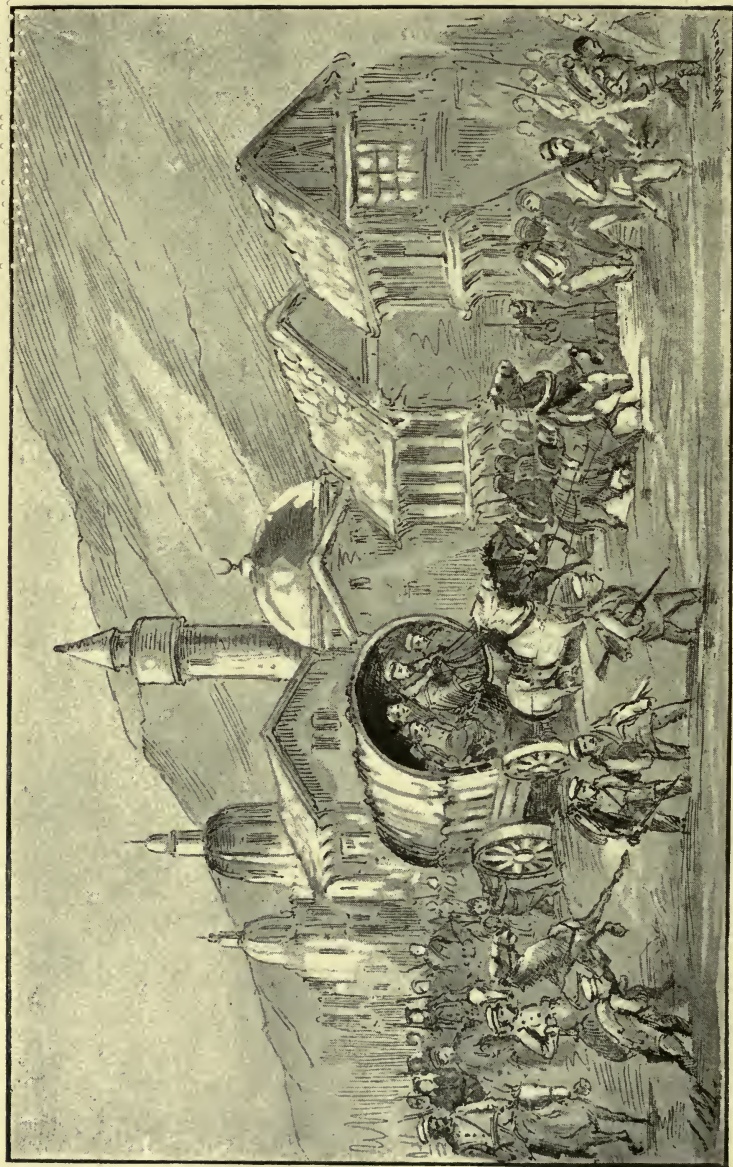
"Wal," said he, in broad Yankee twang, "I think you 're right; they 've been at it for months, and there 's very little promise of increasing speed."

"How long, now, do you think it would take Britishers to accomplish the same end?"

Actually, I had not the slightest idea, but I was not going to collapse before my Yankee interrogator; so I suggested, as an improvement on the then state of affairs, that it would take *us*, say, about a fortnight or three weeks.

"By the way," I continued, "how long do you think it would take the Americans to achieve a similar result?"

"Americans? Oh, that's a *very* different kettle o' fish.



A SEA OF MUD.

Americans?" and with this he took out his watch, and glanced at it several times in meditative silence. "The Americans? Wal, I should say, as near as I can calculate, somewhere between five-and-twenty minutes and half an hour," and with this he turned on his heel with a self-satisfied air, leaving me to digest his not very flattering comparison.

Mud! Why, the word is inadequate; it was a perfect sea of mud, a never-to-be forgotten Slough of Despond. Then the rain; it was not ordinary rain—it came down literally in sheets; and the terrible necessity of the whole thing, too, was so evident. There was no waiting till it had abated; no halting till the overflow of the Danube had subsided; no chance of going into quarters till the roads became even reasonably passable. An army of many thousands of men may not be left in the lurch with impunity; in a very short time besiegers and besieged would be in the same predicament. The Russians were thus as pitilessly circumvented indirectly by mud as the Turks were by that glittering fringe of Muscovite steel.

Look at that never-ending line, team after team, of supply waggons as they cross the undulating bridge of boats and essay to climb to higher, dryer ground from the river side; it is for all the world like a plague of flies, striving in vain to stem the tide against a torrent of liquid cocoa. It reaches the axles of the waggons and the horses' girths; men, up to their waists in it, belabour the poor brutes thus hopelessly surrounded, and tug equally hopelessly at the embedded spokes, or push behind for dear life.

Yes; it was memorable mud that, and no mistake.

More horses are now hitched on to the struggling twos, fours, and sixes already in harness. Then there is a final effort all round, and the creaking araba, by the combined strength of panting beasts and almost exhausted drivers, is wrenched from its setting, and reaches a higher level; only, however, with yet another and another sea of mud before it. But let us stop a moment to contemplate the result of this immersion.

These are supply waggons, remember; let us take the first. It contains tea. The water has got into those huge cases; they have swollen and burst, consequently a long perpetual stream of weak Bohea, which would shame the 5 o'clock tea-table for insipidity, pours out and wastes its faint odour on the muddy expanse below. Next comes a huge, van-like cart, full of biscuits, bread and flour. The flour itself has long since turned to dough, the biscuits to the consistency of the flabbiest of crumpets, and the bread from white to brown; or, if brown, from that colour to black, owing to the bath of mud it has been in, which has rendered quite two-thirds of that supply unfit for human food. Sugar and salt come next; the loaf is moist indeed now, while the salt flows out in one long stream from the sacks which contained it.

A few days' downpour would have been a godsend; earth and air would have been equally cleared by it, but such a long continued deluge as this carried destruction with it everywhere.

The men—sturdy fellows, equal to anything, one would have thought to look at them—collapsed completely, very many actually falling by the way, diarrhœa, despondency and death following thus closely in the wake of Mud.

Officers and men alike put superhuman thew and sinew into this work of extrication. As for Coningsby and myself, we did our best with the rest at the spokes ; although Coningsby to this day declares that the whole secret of our being so long embedded was that, while he tugged vigorously one way, on one side of our waggon, I was tugging with equal energy on the other, only—in the opposite direction.

No one can conceive how our unfortunate team of four got down the main street of Sistova. That which made an admirable subject for the pages of the *Illustrated London News* was a sorry experience, I assure you. Those half-drowned horses plunged and dived, just as the seals do in the tanks at the Zoo, their very noses being often submerged as they strained every nerve to get yet a few yards farther. We soon added two more to the four-in-hand, and to these again at length, at an exorbitant price, we had hitched on two draught bullocks, and with their united efforts we were thus able somehow to pull through in the end, only to again flounder in successive lakes of mud, alternated by occasional high ground, till we got out into the open on our way to Plevna.

How quickly then the aspect of affairs changed all round. To be within touch of mosque and minaret, streets and telegraph wires, was in some sense to feel one was within touch of civilization ; but when those links were left behind, when out in the open we had to face the same dangers and difficulties which had beset us in the town, the hopelessness of our condition asserted itself to the full. Look which way one would, the story was all too plainly told by our surroundings. There were at the commence-

ment of that siege just 66,000 draught-horses, used for the conveyance of supplies, ammunition, &c., from Sistova to Plevna; there were now exactly 44,000, leaving the 22,000 victims to Bulgarian mud to which I have referred.

Why, they lay there in that Valley of Death, or, perhaps I should say, those successive vales of death, in every conceivable position—some rearing, some plunging, others on their sides and backs, while the heads and heels of some were alone visible; nor were our horses slow to realise their grim surroundings and the danger they were in themselves. The one I rode at one time became quite unmanageable; so horror-struck did the poor creature seem, as he sniffed the malodorous dead horses round about him.

I have endeavoured to convey some idea of this in the accompanying illustration, but pen and pencil alike fail me. That ride to Plevna was something rather to think about than talk about. Dysentery, death in every possible form, laying poor humanity low at every turn; utter despondency reigned supreme, dead horses, putrefying carcasses, half buried in the mud, forming a fit setting to that picture of despair. There they were—dead, all dead as the proverbial door-nail—half devoured in many cases by the wolves, and other smaller fry who, with those “birds of a feather” which always “flock together” on such occasions, had come from time to time “i’ the glimpses o’ the moon” for midnight orgie.

Later on we fell in with the Imperial Guard, 30,000 strong, the very cream of that splendid army which Osman, by taking the strategic position he had chosen at Plevna, had so effectively blocked on their way to Constan-



THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

tinople. As that long line wound "Over the hills and far away," it looked like some gigantic centipede, the illusion being all the greater when it is remembered that with such a vast number of men there are always some, now to the right, now to the left, falling out for one purpose or another, which fact gives the column at once (keeping to our simile of the centipede) the appearance of having innumerable legs. Here and there sotnias of Cossacks galloped past us, varied by a patrol now and again, a convoy of stores under a strong escort, a detachment of infantry, or a lumbering field-piece. It was to the Imperial Guard that we attached ourselves, the pride of the Empire, so soon to play a conspicuous part at Gorni Dubnik, and elsewhere at the front. It is not easy to the uninitiated to imagine the feelings excited by associating oneself with an army corps on the march. I had been present when the *vivas* of the excited multitude accompanied them through the streets of Bucharest, and now I was again with them *en route* for Plevna.

Our first halt was on the outskirts of a long track of forest land, and it was a marvellous sight to see—in a miraculously short time—a canvas city appear where, but a few moments before, nothing but gorse and heather had been. Still more so to watch the fatigue parties attack that forest for fuel.

In a very few moments the trees seemed alive with men who, like armed monkeys, axe in hand, leapt from bough to bough with apelike agility; so that in ten minutes those monarchs of the woods had lost the fair proportions which it had taken them so many years to develop. Branch after branch now came crashing to the

ground, followed by "Vivas!" and "Hurrahs!" which once heard would not easily be forgotten; then came the crackling of thousands of camp-fires, which sounded for all the world like distant file-firing in skirmishing order. This was followed by the cooking of rations, till later on, came the soldier's greatest sedative—his pipe. Then the last bugle sounded, the wild excitement of the last few hours was over, and the camp of the Imperial Guard was wrapped in silence.

The village nearest to which the encampment was placed had been devoted very wisely by the officers to the ambulance, soldiers being forbidden to enter it; hence it was that we hastened with all possible speed in that direction. Our first inquiry for accommodation was met by the objection that there was only one room, and as the wife of the Bulgar to whom we spoke was expected at any moment to add to the population it was impossible to accommodate us. We were prepared for excuses, but this was an unanswerable one; so we devoted our efforts to the next hut. There we were received with surly indifference by a Turkish family, who naturally looked upon us as the invaders we were. However, by a display of determination we managed, after some difficulty, to gain our ends.

Having seen to our horses, and secured them in a sort of enclosure—we returned to the exceedingly stuffy, smoke-begrimed hut in which we were to pass the night. The next consideration was to get water, but any information on that head we found was, for some strange reason, withheld.

Your rigid Moslem is a total abstainer, and likes to

keep his special brew of *aqua pura* to himself. In vain we pleaded, till, finding remonstrance of no avail, we adopted severer tactics; and so, taking the two male representatives of the family by their collars, tickling their ears with our revolver-muzzles as they went, we persuasively induced them to lead the way to the well.

The next difficulty was, how we were to ensure that it had not been poisoned, which point, however, was soon



A GENTLE PERSUADER.

decided, for at the instance of the same inexorable revolver-muzzles we compelled each to take a copious draught, allowing a sufficient time to elapse before we refreshed ourselves or our retainers, so as to make sure that no ill effects were likely to follow.

After a long day's hard riding, we reached on the following evening the crest of a high hill, when suddenly—a vast amphitheatre—before us lay the whole area of

that great siege, and we felt a curious thrill of pleasure—may I say pride?—at being participators as journalists in those great events we were about to chronicle. Though hidden by the undulations of the country, we had long heard the cannonading in the distance from the redoubts and earthworks which formed so deadly a circle round the doomed town.

Night was closing in as we wound our way down into the valley. As we did so, the sky each moment was lit



WE TOOK TO TRADE.

up vividly with flash after flash, each sending a shell on its cruelly destructive course. Terrible was the earnestness about the whole thing; the perpetual fusilade from the rifle-pits, the thousands of camp fires and tents, which here, there, and everywhere extended before us, till, in the grey shadows of a frosty night, they were lost to view. Taken *ensemble*, they certainly formed the most impressive picture I had ever witnessed.

It will be well to remember, at this point, that here we had a difficult part to play, since, as journalists, we were forbidden to join the Russian army at the front. So far it had been entirely due to our playing the part of camp-followers, and taking a well-stocked waggon with us, that we had succeeded in getting through as we had done. But now, in the very jaws of the Great Bear as it were, we had indeed to be on the *qui vive* lest we unmasked our batteries. Since, however, we decided to beard that hirsute quadruped in his den, we pitched our tents in the village of Porodim, under the very nose of the Grand Duke, our mud hut not being more than 200 yards from the Imperial quarters, where we were perhaps less open to suspicion than elsewhere. To better carry out the deception, we hung several bunches of candles outside our waggon, and had some large Dutch cheeses and a few tins of preserved meat put well in sight during that time of day when we were most open to scrutiny.

The tents, waggon, and small Bulgarian mud hut which constituted our quarters, were all within touch of the Cossack camp, and beyond this, roads in every conceivable direction led up to the heights from which the batteries were bellowing day and night, lighting up the sky from sundown to sunrise as they poured their deadly messengers into devoted Plevna.

We very soon found the Cossacks almost *too* good customers, for our much-treasured stores began to diminish visibly. I believe it is on record that some things were actually sold, but it certainly happened that many went. Our reputation, however, as camp-followers being established, it was not long before we reduced our daily

display to candles and empty boxes, keeping our other supplies out of sight in the hut.

One peculiarity with a genuine Cossack is that he hates water like a mad dog, and as we every morning washed in the open as best we could, in big buckets of water from a neighbouring well, the ice on which often had to be broken, we were regarded as curious, uncanny creatures indeed by these free-lances.



THEY WASH IN THE WINTER TIME.

Once when we were engaged at our ablutions, one of a wondering crowd of these fellows who had come to look on put his astonishment into words.

“What wonderful people those are!” he said. “What country can they come from? Why they wash in the winter time!”

While on the subject of Cossacks, I may mention that Coningsby and myself were one day just about to do justice to a fowl which we had—well—caught in the neighbourhood and duly cooked. On turning, we were surprised to find one of a long train of Cossack bullock-drivers stopping and looking down at us with envious curiosity. Both feeling an instinctive desire to



A TIT BIT.

say something, we talked with playful *badinage* much rubbish which, we felt, being in English, would apply as well as the most profound philosophy to an ill-bred Muscovite. He listened for some time to our chaff, with apparently stolid indifference till Coningsby, dividing the fowl and holding up one half by the drumstick, said—

“Does a fondness for cold fowl run in your family, dear boy? This sort of thing ought to suit you to a T.”

In a moment that clumsy waggoner became a new man. All nervous energy and settled purpose, springing suddenly forward, he grasped the fleshy end of that drumstick in his grimy fingers, and the next instant had mangled it with his teeth beyond all reclaim.

He had taken Coningsby at his word, and we were left on short commons indeed; though this surprise, sudden as it was, was quite eclipsed by that which followed it, when that burly bullock-driver replied in excellent English—

“Ah, just so. Sad, isn’t it? Very sad. Lost your leg, eh? But not in the service; no, not so bad as that, anyhow,” and then turning to a dog which I had not till then noticed, he said, “Crunch, poor Crunch! Hungry too, eh? Sad, very sad, isn’t it? Never mind; there’s the bone. Make the best of it. Thank you. Good morning. Remember, there may be Britishers in Cossack garb just as there are wolves in sheep’s clothing. Sad, isn’t it? Very sad!”

Those of my readers who have read *The Wanderings of a War Artist* in its earlier stages will be familiar with our old friend of the Quartier Latin who, during the siege of Paris, lived as best he could by his wits, and who, it will be remembered, drank several glasses of *bock* at my expense, and accepted cheerfully, but with apologies, several small silver coins—as a loan only—pending those better days which were in store for him—which, however, had not yet arrived, as may be seen by the fact that he was now doing odd jobs in connection with the armies of the Czar,

as a sort of general utility man, his knowledge of French and English standing him in good stead with the officers, who, as a rule, seemed to me better versed in these than in their native tongue. Nor was this by any means the last I saw or heard of my eccentric friend, who was attached for some little time to the camp situated nearest to our own bivouac, and whose accomplishments as a ne'er-do-weel were, I found out, quite equalled by his skill as a flute-player.

Some of those evenings round the camp-fire (which, by the way, at the ordinary rate of siege prices for wood, have often cost us ten or fifteen shillings to replenish for yet another hour's comfort), were pleasant enough, and a popular volume might have been written on the stories then told; one of which, by Coningsby, touching a little experience of his own, I remember ran as follows.

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Filthy lucre was at the bottom of it, as it is at the bottom of most things. The British Consul (I think it was at Philippopolis) had certain valuable stores and money to send from one hospital to another across country; the money, I may mention, having been chiefly contributed by that most estimable of women, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Having no reliable man at hand to look after its safety on the journey, he asked Coningsby—who, with his servant, was going in that direction—to undertake the onerous office, which, the stores being packed on mule-back and the money safely deposited, he agreed to do; an escort of six Circassians having been specially provided for the greater safety of the little party.

But to come at once to the point. Having been on their

journey for some time, and having reached the most sequestered part of a wood they had to traverse, Coningsby's dragoman came to him and declared to having overheard a plot on the part of the Circassian escort, who, having found in some way how valuable a charge they had, had determined to murder Coningsby and himself and make off with it.

An inspiration seemed to possess the *Times* correspondent. He mustered the six immediately, and declaring there were brigands in the wood, ordered two to gallop off and scour the neighbourhood in one direction, again ordering two more to ride off in another, while he awaited the tidings they should bring him.

All this, being enforced at a revolver's muzzle, was subscribed to, since the opportunity for carrying out their scheme of murder and robbery could be put into effect later on.

Thus, having got rid of four out of six, Coningsby now turned with his dragoman on the other two, and compelled them to gallop in front of them in yet a third direction, while the mules were driven as best they could in the middle, Coningsby and his servant still covering the backs of their advance-guard with their six-shooters.

What became of the outwitted four, I never heard.

Yes, we had some merry moments, though some very miserable ones too during the silent watches of the night, I can assure you. Indeed, I remember one bitterly cold night, a little group of benumbed correspondents were seated round the almost dead embers of our camp fire. We had quite exhausted our supply of wood and animal spirits, and had run short, too, I remember, in the im-

portant matter of tobacco ; even the last bugle had long since sounded, and save for the monotonous cannonade, and lurid light which lit up the redoubts from time to time, all was quiet as the grave.

We were truly in sorry plight ; at the lowest ebb of that depression which, when, as now, all things tend towards it, will sometimes affect the most volatile.

It was at this supreme moment that we heard a familiar sound suddenly break through the stillness of the night.



HOME, SWEET HOME.

We all listened intently. Yes, it must be—it was ! It could be no individual phantasy, for we all heard it. It was—in the most perfect time, with the most refined feeling—the strains of an air which thrilled us with new life, which brought back the blood to our half-curdled veins again, as we caught the rhythm of that dear old melody, so familiar to us all, of “Home, sweet Home.”

We rose with one accord and listened. It floated across

the still night air to remind us, in pathetic strains, of the homes, the wives, and sweethearts we had left behind us. Need I say that it proceeded from the rough reed pipe of my friend the Cossack camp-follower, whom I had met, in an earlier stage of existence, in the Quartier Latin?

“Odd, isn’t it? Very odd,” as he said when I unearthed him the next morning. “If I’d only devoted half the time to playing the flute which I have devoted to playing the—fool—I might have been better off now—eh? Sad— isn’t it?—very sad!”



CHAPTER VIII.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT—"WANTED"—A REFINED CRUELTY—CAPRICE OF WAR—A MEMORABLE OMELETTE—OUR GREAT "INTERNATIONAL" STEW—THE MONTAGU DINNER—WONDERFUL WOLVES—LOST IN A FOG—IN THE GRIP OF THE ENEMY—SAVED BY THE MUEZZIN—ROUND ABOUT THE REDOUBT—PAINFULLY POINTED ATTENTIONS—HOW I REACH THE GRAVITZA—MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHONE—HOW A MESSENGER OF DEATH MET THE MESSENGER OF WAR—RADISHEVO REDOUBT—A WAR DANCE—SOMETHING ABOUT PICKETING—QUALITY OF COURAGE—A SAD END TO A BRAVE BEGINNING—RATIONS—WAR PRICES—GORNÝ DUBNAK—A SIMILE: WAR AND THE ELEMENTS—THIRSTING FOR FAME—AN ADMIRABLE RUSE DE GUERRE—A QUEER BULGARIAN CUSTOM—LOST IN A SNOWDRIFT.

THE qualifications of a war correspondent should be threefold: an iron constitution, a laconic, incisive style, be it with pen or pencil, and sufficient tact to establish a safe and rapid connecting link between the forefront of battle and his own head-quarters in Fleet Street or elsewhere. I have known several good men and true, eminently fitted by their skill, power of endurance and pluck, to have played conspicuous parts, but who, lacking the strategy necessary to their office, have comparatively come to grief. Hundreds of their sketches or letters sent from the front have gone no farther than the military field-post,

where they have been destroyed or, on the other hand, given to unscrupulous messengers who, once paid, have made small work of them.

As I have already said, our most trusty postmen in Asia Minor were brigands, who, having everything to gain by the delivery of what was to them valueless, found honesty for the time being the best policy.

For my own part, in all Bulgaria, I found only two men devoted to my interests, my servant—a most invaluable fellow—and myself. During the time I was at Plevna, I never once trusted to the tender mercies of the Russian field-post; I always sent, or personally took, my sketches across the Danubian frontier, and when they were actually deposited in Roumanian mail-bags, I knew, that within a measurable time, they would find their way to the editorial sanctum of the *Illustrated London News*.

On one occasion, when returning across the Danube's blue waters to Plevna from one of these errands, I witnessed a scene which I at once made note of and sent on to my paper, and when, in due course, it appeared in the pages of the *Illustrated*, I found myself very much "wanted" by the incensed Russian authorities, who may now learn, for the first time, that [camp-followers are as capable of contrivance as Muscovite diplomatists. The incident forms a subject for illustration, representing a number of Turkish prisoners, occupied in the unsavoury task of breaking up the gravestones of their ancestors to make roads over which to drag the heavy Russian field-pieces to Plevna.

To a sensitive mind, this would be a refined punishment indeed; but—let us hope the average Turk introduced



THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

IRVING. MON. 1871

little sentiment into his task. Yet there were many I noticed who felt it acutely, and who even chose the alternative—imprisonment—rather than desecrate God's acre. Here and there Russian artillerymen posted themselves, ready to menace with knotted whips those who were tardy in the work of demolition. How that sketch ever circumvented the Russians, and arrived in the Strand, puzzled more than one wiseacre at Porodim and elsewhere, for little did they suppose at that time that, with "a smile which was childlike and bland," there was a camp-follower among them taking notes.

There is something mysteriously capricious about war; you turn out in the morning, are out all day, often all night too, for the matter of that, yet it is impossible to foretell, ever so vaguely, what may happen the next moment. Experience teaches nothing; all seems as incomprehensible as the animal you found in the Noah's Ark of your childhood, when you wondered in your innocence if it were a camel or a sheep. Even that every-day meal, breakfast, has its unexpected incidents, and dinner, the culinary arrangements of which have been superintended by a representative of the press, often turns out a marvellous—if not an agreeable—surprise. Coningsby it was who aimed at gastronomic excellence, especially on one occasion; but, alas! he aimed only.

His efforts in this particular case took the shape of an omelette—a memorable omelette—which he strove to make in some queer Bulgarian utensil, and which was ultimately poured out of the spout, and drunk out of cups.

Ye Gods! it was a mystic concoction indeed.

His great "international" stew, as he called it, was,

however, a marked success, a concoction in which tinned soups, fish, flesh, fowl and vegetables played very mixed parts. Like the "penny surprise packet" of the London toyshop, you never knew what was going to turn up; just as a strongly suspicious flavour of rabbit began to assert itself, you found it gliding rapidly into that of sardines, succeeded in turn by boiled mutton and pickled cabbage. Shudder, if you will, at so strange a conglomerate; *quality* in those rough times was not so much a consideration as *quantity*. With the appetites of ostriches, we were equal to anything, *ex necessitate rei*. Grasping the situation, we accepted with equal satisfaction, each fresh development. A good substantial stew of *something* was quite sufficient, no matter what the ingredients might be; it was satisfying, and that was everything.

It is astonishing how vigorous good health and a well-sharpened appetite will adjust matters, for we were always able to sleep snugly through the bombardment, which was a running accompaniment to all we did, without a shadow of indigestion, and even to withstand, as a rule, the howling of those wolves which at night came down in hundreds, seeking what they might devour, always supposing the object of their attention was beyond the power of retaliation, for they had too much dead material at hand to be very dangerous to the living; yet there was something indescribably weird and grim about the short snapping bark of those mangy scavengers, as they scurried past us, scraping and raking about in the darkness, as they went in quest of food.

Amongst the many contributions I sent home was a sketch of our little encampment so attacked, in which

Coningsby and myself were depicted issuing from our tents with cocked revolvers, endeavouring to scare the intruders. I may here incidentally mention Coningsby's version of that illustration, which he amusingly explained at a Press dinner given me by my brethren of the pen and pencil, in their kindness of heart, on my return to England. The portion referring to those wolves ran somewhat as follows :—

Never, under any circumstances, gentlemen, should any of you become correspondents, go to the front with a war artist; they are dangerous to a



degree on the war-path, I can assure you. Some here may remember a picture in the *Illustrated London News*, representing Montagu and myself attacked by wolves in our encampment at Plevna. The true story of the origin of that sketch has never been told; you shall have it now.

I was in sorry plight; all day had I been on the move in quest of incident, and now my well-earned repose was to be disturbed by crowds of howling, bleary-eyed beasts outside. I was utterly disgusted. Suddenly a brilliant idea suggested itself; there was at least one way out of the difficulty. If there was one thing in this world calculated, above all others, to scare those wolves, it would be a sketch by the special artist of the *Illustrated London News*;—so, without more ado, I rushed into Montagu's tent, seized one of his latest productions, and rushing out into the open, displayed it by

the light of the moon to those noisy intruders. The effect was magical; with a howl that I can never forget they frantically tore away, far far out into their dreary Balkan retreats. But, gentlemen [he went on], there is a terrible sequel to this, which proves—beyond the shadow of a doubt—how dangerous a travelling companion your war artist is.

About an hour afterwards, those persistent wolves actually came back again in redoubled numbers, and then it was that a terrible vengeance fell upon me. Montagu came flying into my tent—he startled me. Had one of the brutes got hold of him? No; he came in breathless haste, saying —“There is but one thing now left to us, otherwise we shall be devoured; it’s a terrible resource, but extreme cases require extreme measures!” and with this he rushed forward and seized my last manuscript for the *Times*. The next moment found him outside facing a crowd of those lean beasts, reading aloud to them one of the paragraphs from my article. It was *more* than enough for our four-footed enemy. They disappeared in less than no time; indeed, I have been told, they have not been seen in Bulgaria since (?).

Take Coningsby’s story with the proverbial grain of salt if you will—reference to it finds a proper place here; but, at the same time, let it not for one moment interfere with the continuity of our story of every-day life at Plevna.

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Hark! what’s that? Yes, it must be the Muezzin calling the Faithful to prayer. What an awful predicament!

It was early morning. The *Times* correspondent, myself, and four Russian officers had been taking a ride round the lines before breakfast. Our horses were fresh, and what with giving them rein on this account, and a dense fog preventing our seeing many inches before our noses, we had lost our way so utterly that we were only saved from going straight into the Ottoman camp—which would have meant certain death—by that timely call to prayer, chanted in measured tones by the Muezzin—

“Allah, el Allah! Allah be praised!”



AT THE FRONT.

We reined in instantly, wondering which way to turn, yet fearing lest we should be detected.

Happily for us, the snow was so deep that our approach had at least been noiseless. As far as sound is concerned, nothing is so deceptive as fog; and this made our present situation all the more perplexing, as our next move might actually lead us into the very jaws of death.

We were at that moment just, as it were, within the very grip of the enemy; one false step and we should be lost. Imagine, if you can, a moment more critical; and then suppose, peering through the fog as we did, that you see ten or twelve shadowy horsemen approaching. Mechanically we drew our revolvers, waiting with stolid determination to sell our lives as dearly as possible in the impending struggle.

Just as an old picture looms out from the dust of ages under the touch of the expert renovator, so did those horsemen assume form and colour through that curtain of heavy, cold, grey mist. The tension was terrible. Closer and closer they came—our lives were not worth five minutes' purchase—when, to our infinite surprise, we discovered those horsemen to be Cossack scouts, and not, as *we* had decided they must be—Turks. I need hardly say, that under their guidance we were soon within our own lines again.

As I live over again the incidents of the campaign, I am reminded, whilst relating my experience of that fog, of yet another incident which occurred later on the same day, after our return from that morning's ramble.

Being anxious to discover as many good pictorial incidents as I could, I had started out alone, intent on

picking up what came in my way, leaving Coningsby hard at work in our mud hut at Porodim, writing his article for the *Times*.

Now it so happened that, in making for one of the redoubts, I somehow again lost my bearings; having been attracted to a valley in another direction, where a



PLEVNA FROM PORODIM.

group of soldiers were watering their horses at one of those picturesque wells peculiar to Bulgaria. Now, I had half finished a rough sketch of my surroundings, when, to my surprise, those Russians and myself discovered we were in a position more exposed than pleasant, finding ourselves in a gap between two redoubts, and so within full range of the Turkish rifle pits.

I need hardly say we soon beat a hasty retreat in quest of cover.

I am not likely to forget that time, for the moment I ascended a slight elevation a rattling fire opened upon me. The enemy had evidently spotted me, and good sport I was, no doubt—to them. Again beating a retreat, more rapid than strategic, I found myself still the object of their painfully pointed attentions. No bewildered, hunted hare ever bolted in greater trepidation than I did to get clear of that enemy's fire, verily it was a case of *nunc aut nunquam*.

Run? Why, bless you, I nearly ran my legs off. At length, with a great gasp of relief, I found myself under shelter of a redoubt, where at least I was screened from everything save shell-fire.

By the time I had reached this spot, experience had taught me to know a good thing when I found it, so I determined, with permission of the officer in command, to "bide a wee" till such time as, with greater safety, I could get back to Porodim. An occasional shell diversified the monotony of one's sketching in the snowdrifts of those earthworks, till, as time wore on, and I was hoping anxiously for an opportunity of escape to more congenial quarters, to my utter astonishment, there rushed in for protection in a state of the wildest excitement—yet another correspondent. It was Coningsby, of the *Times*, whom I had left but a few hours before scribbling away in our hut at Porodim. He, like myself, had wished to pick up subjects in the more advanced lines; and he, also, had not only been caught as I had, but had actually hastened to the shelter of the same redoubt.

He, however, was better informed than myself; for, to my surprise, he told me we were actually in the Gravitza—that ambition of the War Correspondent, the satisfaction of being in which had been accorded to so few. When he had recovered breath, he gasped out—

“I say, Montagu, this incident is too good to lose; but the worst of it is, the world won’t believe us. Yet, stay; I have it! In the sketch you have just made for the *Illustrated* introduce me as I am, in the foreground, and I’ll put an account of your presence here into the *Times*.”

And so it came about that a picture appeared not long afterwards, truthfully representing the *Times* and the *Illustrated News* correspondents heroically (?) holding their own in the interests of their respective papers.

Talking of this, brings me naturally to another notable earthwork, the Radishevo redoubt, and of a curious incident which occurred in it.

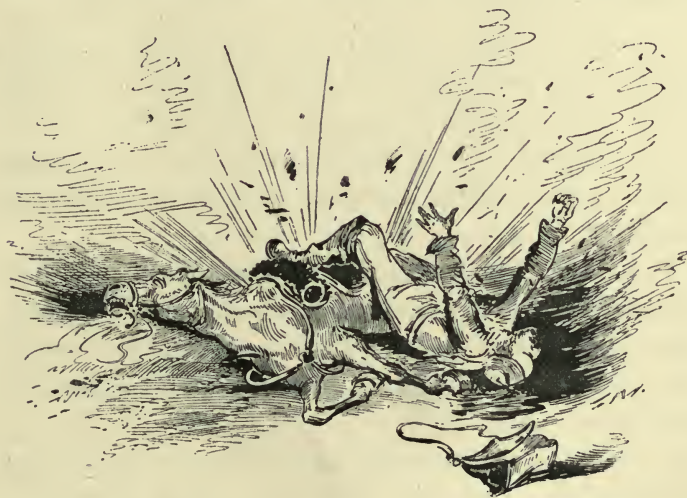
On my arrival there early one morning I observed that the officers and men were immensely excited, watching something at a distance with intense interest. This very naturally aroused my curiosity, and I craned my neck in the same direction. Presently I discovered with the aid of my field glasses a Turkish messenger, at present a mere pigmy in the distance, galloping in hot haste across an open space to get under cover of a Turkish redoubt. A despatch bag could distinctly be seen strapped to his side, and by the direction he was taking we could clearly see his intended destination.

Poor miserable Moslem! little did he dream he was the object of so much concern.

At that moment, on his special account, a gun has

been sighted so as to cover the entrance to the Turkish earthworks, through which, in all human probability, he must presently pass. His time was at hand. The excitement of those round about me grew momentarily greater. Suddenly there came the hush of absorbed interest. Alas, poor mortal! could he have seen us at that moment, he might well have sighed "All is as nothing, now."

The scream of the shell as it whizzed through the air proclaimed all too plainly that the messenger of Death



had started to meet that messenger of War. Unerringly it did its work, for the next moment we saw it burst just outside that Turkish redoubt; while a dead horse and its rider lay prone and much mixed on the spot.

Then—aye, then you should have seen the wild delight of those artillerymen in the Radishevo. The gun had been well sighted indeed. Had they all received decora-

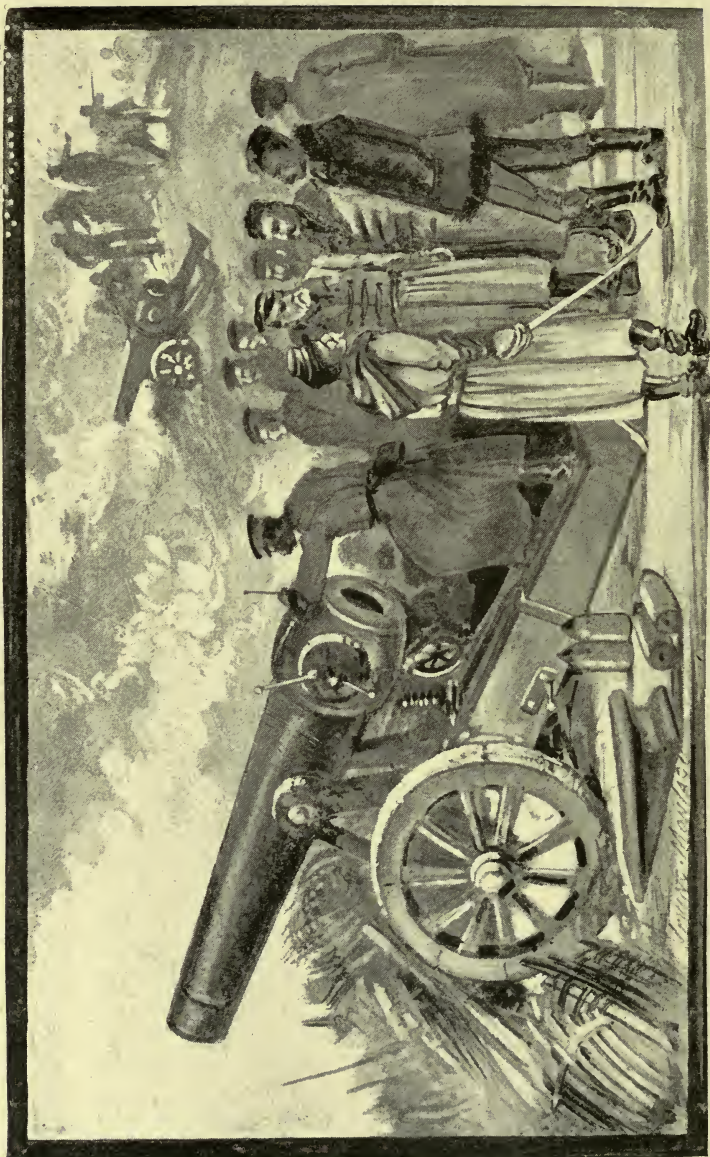
tions at that moment, they could not have been more elated ; and when Russian artillerymen dance fandangoes in redoubts, it is with a delirium inconceivable even in the piping times of peace.

Of course, many stampedes took place during the investment ; notably one of about sixty or seventy scared horses, which galloped pell-mell into the Turkish lines—spoils of war which were thoroughly appreciated, and were no doubt most acceptable to some of the worst mounted of the Bashi-Bazouks, whose original hacks were promptly devoured.

In cases of sudden alarm, save with artillery horses, which, being accustomed to cannonading, are naturally not so easily scared, horses, as a rule, set picketing at naught ; indeed, with all armies, this seems to be a vexed subject, the Belgians appearing to carry the palm for simplicity.

From the first, their horses are thoroughly trained in the utter futility of resistance ; this being done by attaching them by horse-lines to iron rings embedded in a stone floor. When thus firmly secured, every possible means to scare them is devised.

Of course, at first, the silly young things do all they can to break away, till with experience comes philosophy. Their efforts to gain their liberty become less and less, till, thoroughly recognizing the fact that they are helpless, they resign themselves to their fate ; and so satisfied do they become of the immovability of picket-pegs that, in their maturer years, they require only the slightest thing in the world to secure them, being thoroughly impressed in their youth with the idea that those pegs afore-



BEFORE PLEVNA.

said are more than a match for them. How thankful the Board School teacher would be, in these days of "school strikes," did he feel he could impress *his* silly young things as thoroughly. But in these days of advanced knowledge the child is too often, from its own point of view, father to the man.

It is a common practice on the Continent, where this scheme is adopted, to picket a number of horses thus, and then with fireworks and other devices to literally make their hair stand on end with fright. The Cossacks, to use a nautical phrase, hobble their horses fore and aft when they turn them out to grass; not so, however, when on picket duty; then the bridle is fastened lightly over the pommel, and the small Cossack horse is secured beyond the possibility of stampede—indeed, so attached as a rule are beast and rider, that horse-lines are replaced by those nearer ties which make them inseparable.

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Courage, I take it, is an abstract quality which it is difficult to define; anyhow, those who profess not to know what fear is, are minor heroes compared with those who realise danger and, facing it, overcome their natural dread. No man of real experience minds admitting that there have been times when it has required all the moral effort at his command to overcome the strong desire he has had, at a moment of extreme danger, to make himself conspicuous by his absence. The cases I quoted during the Franco-Prussian and Carlist campaigns are in point, and many similar ones might be mentioned; one, in particular, comes vividly to my memory now.

I was leaving the advanced lines one day, after hot

shelling had been going on for many hours, when my attention was called to a small squad of men, commanded by an officer, going to the rear of one of the redoubts. I noticed two physically fine fellows, bare-headed and without arms, in advance of the rest, marching with firm tread and in moody silence: they were deserters—men whose bravery till that morning had been beyond the



shadow of suspicion, who had fought like lions, but who, in a spasm of panic, had bolted out of the earthworks in which, till that unhappy moment, they had been working like Trojans in the very teeth of a galling fire. One had probably influenced the other; and now they were going with a courage, which was affecting, to meet their death at the hands of their comrades. A drum-head court-martial had settled the matter in a few minutes;

they had been caught in the act, brought back, and sentenced.

The mute appeal of these men as they passed me, prompted my speaking to the officer in command of the firing party in French, who, in excellent English—guessing my nationality from my accent, I suppose—replied, in a few words, that which I have recorded as to their oft-tested courage; but he had no power—example must be made. It was a sudden impulse of fear which had brought about the death of two men whose bravery might, but for this, have won them exceptional distinction.

I declined to join the firing party as a spectator to this last scene in their tragic history, the b-r-r-r-r of half-a-dozen muskets telling the tale all too clearly a few moments afterward, as I made my way back to Porodim, there to complete my sketch of the incident, and wonder of what queer material this same courage could be made.

At the time of which I speak, Osman Pasha was of course cut off in Plevna from the outside world, his only chance of joining the long expected relief being, to find a weak point in the cordon of steel by which his devoted army was girt about, and to force it, for sheer starvation now stared them in the face, while the Russians had unlimited supplies of all kinds. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive the vast butcheries necessary to an immense army, such as that of the Czar's, when on the war-path.

Picture to yourself the condition of men whose sole occupation from morning to night is slaughter. It was marvellous, too, to look around in that immediate neighbourhood, and see herd upon herd of cattle secured

in pens, which like that other animal, man, awaited death.

The giving out of rations was an occasion for no end of fun.

Here a refractory ram was almost more than a master for the energetic linesman who struggled to secure him ; there an artilleryman, as if he would unlimber a big gun, makes frantic efforts to bring an obstinate ox into subjection. Again, a burly Cossack calmly strides off in another direction with a dead sheep slung over his shoulders ; and so I might go on, to the end of a very long chapter, had I space at command, to show how, heart and soul, hungry humanity goes into an affair the ultimate end of which means—" dinner."

The exorbitant prices of those stores we took with us in our waggon to the front must not be forgotten, an idea of which may be obtained from the following, which is a copy of a receipt from Coningsby, the *Times* correspondent :—

Received from Irving Montagu, Esq., the sum of Nine Pounds sterling, being half the expenses for stores from Bucharest to Plevna.

ROBERT CONINGSBY (*Times*),

£9 0 0.

Bucharest, Oct. 8th, 1877.

The above was for my share of tinned meats alone, purchased in Bucharest, and consumed on the march within a week. £18 for these, apart from bread, fresh meat, and other necessities, seems at least enough ; but when I say that pickles were sold at 7s. 6d. to 10s. a bottle, sardines from 5s. to 8s. a tin, and so on, you will see that the total may soon be run up. Money made the man round about Plevna, as indeed it does all the world over ; and one's pockets had to be well filled, if life were

to be made worth the living. Very bad claret was from 8s. to 12s. a bottle, while such luxuries as spirits and wines fetched fabulous prices.

To return, however, to the investment. Let us take next in order the battle of Gorny Dubnak, one of the bloodiest engagements, either in Europe or Asia, during the war. Out of three regiments, 154 officers alone were placed *hors de combat*; indeed, the taking of the great redoubt was due entirely to the pluck of private soldiers, who, with great loss, accomplished it.

It was a foggy morning, and the first intimation of the coming conflict was heavy cannonading; the Russians then concentrated three infantry regiments on the spot, the Turks receiving them with a withering fire. Victory to the Russians would mean drawing the girdle of investment nearer to strangulation point, while their failure might mean the ultimate escape of Osman. A Turkish officer for a moment appeared above the smaller redoubt to encourage his men, the next he was lifeless, shot through the heart; then one wild, mad charge, and in a few moments it was in the hands of our side. There was a perfect rain of bullets as the cross fire every moment grew more desperate; the loss of life was terrible, earthwork after earthwork giving way, till at last the Turks were reduced to holding their own at the rear of some old ramshackle buildings.

At this point a wild spirit of enterprise rose amongst the Russians, as to who should be the first to follow up the advantage gained. But still the great redoubt held out, the steady fire from the Turks who occupied it keeping the Muscovites at bay. At last, the very ditch

immediately under it was taken, the Turks hurling *débris* of all sorts on their assailants, being unable to mount their breastworks and fire upon them for fear of the instant death which, when so exposed, awaited them; while the Russians could only retort by hurling mud and stones back on the defenders. It was a unique fight, in which a callous disregard for life on both sides led to terrible slaughter, and its name on the page of history will be handed down amongst those of battles well won.

A memorable day, was that of Gorny Dubnak; and though, of course, such was not the case, it seemed as if the whole of the defences of the beleaguered town had taken up the chorus.

Far and wide the echoes resounded, leaping from hill to hill, till lost in distant murmurs; the fact was that during the fight a distracting fire was kept up all round the cordon, on which the mingled clouds of vapour and smoke hung heavily.

The wars of man and those of the elements always seem to me to have a sort of affinity.

Surely the cumulous clouds, as they hurry-skurry across the hitherto placid sky, may bear comparison with the legions who meet in deadly strife.

The hail of bullets, the fitful flash of powder, and the thunder of the guns, are like Jove's artillery let loose; while the surging thousands represent a sea whose breakers are bayonets, the overwhelming force of which is death; then, now and again a shell comes scudding over the turbulence below, screeching and moaning in the trajectory of its deadly flight like some wild sea-mew swooping down

upon the wreck of all things human here below. I remember it was with some such reflections as these—another day done, another victory won, and night closing in—that I returned to quarters.

During the fighting round Plevna, the Bulgarian contingent were ever anxious, though their opportunities were few and far between, to play their little part; and I am particularly reminded, in illustration of this, of a day when some big field-pieces had to be got into position, how highly honoured a number of them felt who were deputed to bring one of those heavy guns over a rugged upland. They were like school-boys let out for a half-holiday with a new toy—they had a lovely big cannon all to themselves—each one wanted to be first, to show how well he could do it; and even those who were elbowed out for sheer want of room were not content till they had squeezed themselves in somewhere and had seized a spoke or helped push up even in the rear of several others, so as to have had a finger in the glorious work.

During one of their many sorties, an admirable *ruse de guerre* was resorted to by the Turks, who not only secured a large number of the uniforms of dead Russians, in which they proceeded to equip themselves, but also availed themselves of the services of an officer who spoke the language sufficiently well to give the Russian word of command. The day was quite hazy enough for them to be at first only indistinctly seen, so they determined to play the part of a retreating column, and when it was remarked by the Muscovites—that their backs were to the Russian lines—their uniforms Russian, and, moreover, that the word of command was given in Russian—they were

naturally supposed to be a Russian column in retreat, and to fire broadcast into their own men would scarcely be politic. Consequently the command for opening out was at once given, and it was not till they were well in the midst of the unsuspecting invaders that the *ruse* was discovered; then, taken completely by surprise, the small body of Muscovites who held the position, after a short and stubborn resistance, beat a precipitate retreat, and



though many were killed on both sides, the Turks eventually held the vantage point by one of the cleverest tricks which have been recorded amongst the episodes of modern warfare.

I am not exaggerating when I say—that if there is one thing more terrible than to be on a battle-field during the night immediately succeeding a fight, it is to

be within the comparative security of a mud hut, listening to the combined sounds without which make night hideous.

It would require the pen of a Dante to describe the medley of horrors one hears. The melancholy howling and barking of wolves, the dreary, weird scream of the night bird, each and all intent on their ghastly banquet. Then the jolting, creaking sound of the long trains of bullock waggons, as they trundle along, winding their weary way slowly over the crisp, frosty, uneven ground, bearing innumerable freights of groaning sick and wounded, who writhe each moment to some fresh agony; and to this—one perpetual monotonous accompaniment of big guns, despatching, day and night, their death-dealing missiles into the shattered town yonder.

No pen or pencil can convey an idea of the every-day (interwoven) horrors of life at the front; nor can anyone conceive (except the experienced) the strange longing one has, *ad interim*, for great events, which prevent one from brooding on the miseries which surround one. Unfortunately these do not confine themselves to the immediate neighbourhood of the field of action—their effect may be traced for miles and miles to the rear; the trail of the serpent is to be found in violated homes, villages deserted, down-trodden plantations, and fever-stricken districts, far, far beyond the wake of actual war. But enough of this.

In Bulgaria they have an odd custom connected with sanitation in their villages which savours somewhat of our great city during the Great Plague; an idea of which I may give you on referring to some notes on the

subject, which at the time I sent home to the *Illustrated London News*, with corresponding sketches:—

“Bury your dead!” is the proclamation made in a village near the Gravitza redoubt. With an audience of sick and wounded soldiers (says our artist), many looking as if their own interment, if any, were a matter of no far distant date, there was something so grim and quaint about this little episode that I send you a sketch of it. The crier is paid by the villagers, a general collection being made for the purpose, at the rate of about fourpence a day. He takes upon himself, for this consideration, the entire responsibility of disposing of, or seeing disposed of, any carcases which happen to lie in or about the neighbourhood. This, however, is not considered as an equivalent for the high remuneration he receives; so, by an old Bulgarian law, he has to provide any strangers who may enter the village after sunset



BURY YOUR DEAD!

with supper and a bed. I have had his charge translated to me, and it runs as follows:—

“Do ye hear! do ye hear! do ye hear! Bury your dead!—oh, bury your dead! Good people, all listen; then bury your dead!” One Georgevich, on the day previous to my arrival, had neglected this very necessary sanitary measure; but whether it applied to his wife, his grandmother, or his cow, I could not ascertain. The crier, however, who knew how “to point a moral and adorn a tale,” took care to do so on arriving at the delinquent’s house-top (for his harangue always comes from the house-tops). “Do ye hear! do ye hear!—O wicked Georgevich! Pay no more fines, but bury your dead!” And the burial of the dead is a great matter, too, just now round about Plevna, I assure you.

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It was a terrible winter in Bulgaria that of 1877-78, and perhaps one of the most trying of our rough experiences was when, unable to get messengers in camp (having sent our own, with sketches and letters for England, down to the Danube) we had, after a hard day at the front, to start off ourselves in order to get our communications through.

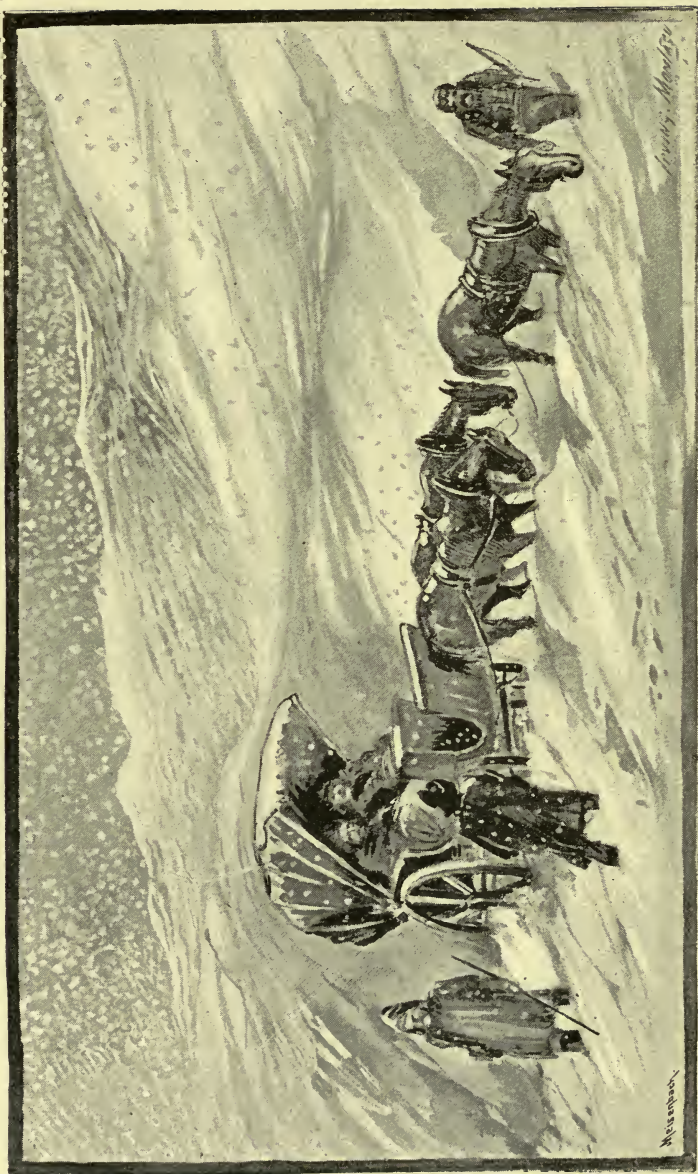
One night I shall ever remember. A Russian officer, his servant, and myself, having requisitioned a rude country drosky, a tumble-down affair, started on one of these expeditions; he intent on joining his regiment, I on getting my sketches through to Roumania. It was a fearful night, in every sense of the word. The wind, piercingly cold, whistled and scudded around us, hurling the fast-falling, drifting snow with such force before it that we were nearly blinded as we faced it; it lay wrapped like a winding sheet on the surrounding hills as we rode through the darkness and peered, as best we could, into the black expanse beyond. Then—to make matters worse—a dense fog came creeping up, till the smallest landmarks we had left to us were completely obliterated. However, the ardour of the special should not be easily damped; and the Russian had to go, come what might. So, with their cracked bells tinkling on their rotten harness, our horses struggled on.

The drosky driver was too sanguine; a dream of Russian roubles and English gold had obscured his mental vision. He felt he knew the way to the village of which we were in quest; but we, as hour succeeded hour, and none of the signs which should have helped us came in sight, began to have grave doubts, which were momentarily increased by

the rapidly thickening fog, and the unceasingly heavy snowfall which came in gusts of blinding fury, and whisked and whirled about us like some storm fiend, come from its home amongst the peaks of the Balkans to crush us in its icy clutches. Thus the long hours of night wore on, till the wind at last abated. Then came a quiet, an awful stillness, which up in those mysterious altitudes was absolutely appalling—quite beyond description.

It was, indeed, a memorable time; and not to us only, for it was on this night, out of a detachment of 400 men sent to occupy a position not very far from Porodim, that 70 of their number were the following morning discovered stone dead—frozen to death in that same terrible snow-storm; though this is only one of very many instances which happened, on that and similar nights, round about Plevna during that fearful winter.





SNOWED UP.

CHAPTER IX.

A PROBLEM AT PORODIM—TURNED OUT BY THE GRAND DUKE
 —THE CZAR'S PERMIT—A PRESENT TO OSMAN—A BARRI-
 CADE OF BULLOCK WAGGONS—THE LAST CHARGE—GENERAL
 SKOBELEFF—THE FLAG OF TRUCE—TEWFIK BEY—THE
 END INEVITABLE—OSMAN WOUNDED—HIS SURRENDER—
 THE GENTLER SEX—THE HOLY RED CROSS (POEM)—
 QUALITY OF OSMAN'S MEN—CAMBRIDGE STUDIO, S.W.—THE
 PIPE OF PEACE—BONES !

HAPPILY that fickle jade Memory inclines—as a rule—in her retrospective glances, to the sunny side of past events. Though, once or twice in our lives, most of us have experienced, at some time or other, a sense of utter dejectedness which we may never forget; of course innumerable causes, physical and mental, bring about such conditions, and it might be argued that the latter is more depressing than the former. On this occasion, however, a combination of these seemed to affect us, for as night wore on, we found ourselves in that rapidly accumulating snow-drift becoming more benumbed and incapable each moment.

As far as the eye could penetrate into the black, starless night, might be seen that white canopy which so effectually prevented the possibility of our knowing in what direction to go, even were locomotion—by some superhuman effort

—possible at all. The silence, too, became appalling, every moment the prospect of a coming end to all things being more evident.

At first, we fought against the intensity of the cold; then we struggled with that fatal drowsiness, which, like some intangible creeping thing, settled upon us, till we felt nature rapidly giving way under the subtle influence which such intense cold produces. Truly, it was a night which we could neither of us easily forget.

Up to this point we had literally been ploughing our way; our horses, dead beat before we had traversed four miles of our route, now refused to move. We were at a standstill, utterly, helplessly, and almost hopelessly snowed up. Fortunately we both had a fair supply of brandy in our flasks, but this amongst four was soon exhausted. The horses being unhitched, and a quantity of sacking having been wrapped about them, the Captain's servant, in company with the drosky driver, coiled themselves up underneath the ramshackle vehicle. As far as myself and fellow traveller were concerned, we were reduced to making a night of it, as best we could, in the open conveyance. Then came the renewed dread of sleep and its fatal consequences; to provide against this, we roused the other two, who were already half stupefied, and explained to them the necessity for one always being awake so as to arouse, after a short interval of rest, the remaining three, and thus providing, as far as possible, against what seemed, despite all our precautions, to be almost inevitable.

I was not only the first to suggest adopting this course, but curiously enough—for, in fairness to the other two, we

drew lots—the first on duty. I lit my pipe, and for about half an hour tramped backwards and forwards in front of that curious group of *les misérables*. Presently I heard the distant tinkling of bells, sledge or drosky bells, coming



A WEARY WATCH.

nearer and nearer, yet never near enough to be within hail; then, when they sounded loudest, the tinkling would be wafted in another direction, and they would become fainter and fainter, till again all was silent—silent, aye, as death itself. They were probably going—as we had

also gone—in circles, which I understand is common in such cases.

The Captain next took my place. Though wrapped in a huge fur coat, I was nearly perished, and seemed to drop off to sleep with the suddenness of one who had taken some strong opiate. Then we in turn aroused the men, and so on, through that seemingly interminable night, the stillness of which was only relieved by the occasional howl of a distant wolf or the uncanny screech of a half-famished night bird.

However, as the longest night must have an end, so morning at last dawned, and a gruesome dawning it was, too, for when the first streak of daylight lit up the eastern sky we were literally unable to put one foot before the other. Our chests were painfully congested, and though all young, we were bent almost double, and stooped like four decrepit octogenarians. It was with the greatest difficulty we re-attached the horses, they being almost as dead beat as ourselves. At last, with our united assistance, the drosky man was again hoisted upon his seat, and we continued our way, at a funereal rate, we knew not whither.

Hope, however, was revived as the morning advanced, for we descried at some distance a scattered collection of mud huts on a slight elevation. Towards these we made the best of our way; nor were we a moment too soon, we were on the verge of collapse—in an utterly exhausted state. On our arrival, the Bulgarian villagers did all that lay in their power to revive us, and happily, at a sort of cabaret in the village, vodki was obtainable; of this we partook in large doses, *one* of which, under other circum-

stances, would have made us intoxicated, but which now took some time before ordinary animation was restored at all. We ascertained that we were about ten or twelve English miles out of our course, but after having thoroughly rested we found comparatively little difficulty, in broad daylight, in finding our destination, where ambulance doctors made up for lost time by building us up again with restoratives.

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Now on my return to Porodim, two days later, there was a certain air of mystery about Coningsby which was not a little disconcerting, and sure enough he presently confided in me his doubts with reference to our being able to hold on in our present quarters.

It appeared that certain envious sutlers had been throwing out hints that our supply-waggon was a delusion and a snare; that, in short, we were no better than we ought to be, and had even gone so far as to give information at head-quarters with reference to us as interlopers. Indeed, his suspicions were too well founded, for that very night the *commandant de place* at Porodim came to our hut, and told us, in excellent French, that the double part we had been playing had been discovered, and, further, by command of the Grand Duke, we were to clear out at day-break. We professed to be totally ignorant of the French language, so avoided further discussion of what we felt would be a hopeless argument. Being quite satisfied, however, that he had made himself thoroughly understood, he retired, leaving us to speculate through the long hours of the night as to what our next move should be.

At daybreak we were aroused by thundering blows with the butt ends of muskets at our cabin door; the commandant had returned, bringing with him six Cossacks as an escort, to see us—in homely language—off the premises. Thus, having no alternative, we had to get together, as well as we could in the short time allowed us, our baggage, horses, servants, and stores, and precede



BY ORDER OF THE CZAR.

those wily horsemen who had been appointed to see us well out of camp.

No sooner, however, were we left alone, and those Cossacks were well out of sight, than we made for the Roumanian lines, hoping we might there find more favour;

but we discovered afterwards we were actually being watched from the roof of a squat Bulgarian church tower by no less a personage than the Grand Duke himself, from whom a Cossack messenger came to say—again in French—that, “although His Royal Highness admired British persistency, he intended to exercise Russian vigilance, and that the bearer of the message should be our guide, *en route* for the Danube, to the next village.

Ours had not been by any means an easy part to play. When in Porodim we were nothing if not camp-followers, while when out of it, in quest of material for our papers, we should have been at once arrested in that garb; hence it was that, when at the front, we assumed the semi-military costume necessary to the occasion, always wearing very conspicuously the Russian brassard on which—in silver—on a field of black, white, and yellow (the national colours), was fastened in bold relief the word “correspondent”; thus we passed muster for specially privileged representatives of the press when in the redoubts, while at head-quarters we were to all appearance only humble vendors of supplies. Happily for us, the Czar interceded in our favour, and we received special permission to return to our respective literary and artistic duties at the front.

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The Russians were by this time thoroughly sick of it, if the judgment of those who were with them may be taken. To all intents and purposes Plevna was as impregnable as ever, although more than half discredited rumours of Osman's being shortly starved out were daily arriving; thus the necessity for making a winter of it, as a matter of national prestige, staring them in the face, a large number

of the besiegers went into such quarters as were available to the rear, even as far back as the islands which dot the Danube between Sistova and Zimnitza. But there was a hopeless doggedness about the way in which they went to work, as if accepting the inevitable with the worst possible grace; and I verily believe that at this moment, had a junction been possible between Osman Pasha and the outside world, or had the most unsubstantial shadows of allies put in an appearance, such relief might considerably have altered that particular page of European history.

There was certainly something indescribably unique in the war-smitten aspect of the country, as one rode through it at that time, not only in the evacuated villages lying, in some cases, between the Russian and Turkish lines but in others still occupied where it was even more terrible.

It is a thrilling memory, which will last me a life-time. Take, for instance, the village of Telish; it is occupied by Russians, who are passing through, and whose camp-fires, made out of all the available wood in the place, are blazing freely—for it is night—and they light up the otherwise semi-forsaken-looking place with a lurid glare, while dogs innumerable howl discordantly through the small hours. In the dark corners of empty, ruined homes they are clustering together as if for mutual support in case of emergencies, their eyes glaring with a half-famished, wolfish glare on all intruders, their fangs reeking with the blood of dead horses, or—who knows?—of men, for how many hundreds of Turks and Bulgarians, aye, of both sexes, must have fallen before the Turks ultimately took up their position and stood at bay at Plevna. I heard of many cases: one woman declared she

was the last of a large family, all of whom had been murdered, as she put it, by the Turks.

I believe there was, nevertheless, much exaggeration as far as atrocities were concerned. At Vraca, a number of homeless, starving creatures, "gipsies and others, were sent in bullock-waggons as a *present to Osman in Plevna*, a grim joke which that general would hardly appreciate.



A SOUVENIR FOR OSMAN PASHA.

The soldiers were very kind to them, sharing with them their rations, and giving them even what money they had," that they might go on their way with lighter hearts.

Already the beginning of the end had come. The eyes of Europe were on that picturesque little town yonder with its two white minarets, its domed church,

and its flat-looking, square-built houses embedded in the sleepy hollow which seemed its nest. Apart from one's terrible surroundings, one could hardly suppose there could be so "much ado about nothing"—at least nothing more than a very ordinary Bulgarian town; but there was little time even for reflection, the stern reality of the situation asserting itself every moment by the sullen roar of the big guns from the redoubts, or the sharp rattle from the rifle-pits of either side.

The actual fall of Plevna should occupy a distinct volume, were it not now an oft-told tale which it is not in my province at least to repeat *in extenso*. The whole world knows how magnificently Osman Pasha held out to the bitter end; indeed, none appreciated his heroism more thoroughly than the Russians themselves. That Osman meant to make a final sortie was known to them for some days previously, having been kept well posted up by spies in his probable movements.

By the way, one of these, a Polish Jew, after being rewarded for his information, fearing that, as a spy confessed, his life even with the Russians would not be worth much, elected to decamp with his ill-gotten gains, which he did, and at the present moment he is carrying on the less profitable, but far less risky occupation of selling photographs of celebrities from an inverted umbrella in the streets of London. I know him personally, and am always a purchaser in passing.

Yes; the Russians, as I have said, were kept well informed of Turkish movements, whereas the information, on the other hand, which Osman obtained must have been very faulty.

On Friday, the 15th of December, it was well known that the Turks were about to make a final effort to escape. Regimental commanders were all on the *qui vive*, scouts were active and sentries doubled, still, for two or three days, nothing of importance happened. Then more spies



PLEVNA AND PENTONVILLE.

arrived, bringing in each case the news of an impending advance on the part of Osman, the truth of which was verified by events which immediately followed and the rapid movement of Turkish troops across the Vid.

It was evident that he supposed he had discovered a weak point in that girdle of Muscovite steel, with which,

by a concentration of his forces, he hoped to be able to grapple. Thus it was, that having brought with him the greater part of his army, including a large quantity of artillery, baggage-waggons, &c., he opened a rattling fire on the besiegers, who replied vigorously with shell and shrapnel. One by one, down went the bullocks attached to those waggons, and the possibility of advance under their friendly cover was at an end. Now it was at this point that, with a degree of dash which would have done honour to any troops in the world, they made for the trenches occupied by the Sibirsky (Siberian) regiment, which, having nearly annihilated, they left behind, only to occupy the battery beyond. Then the Russian Brigade of Grenadiers came down like a whirlwind on the foe, fighting hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, with inconceivable energy and indomitable pluck. Again and again did the tide of battle sway; the losses on both sides being terrible indeed before the Turks eventually retired, in the best order they could, into the mountain gorge from which, leaving Plevna, they had debouched.

The fight—a terrific one—lasted many hours, after which the cannonading, diminishing by very, very slow degrees, at last ceased altogether. Then there came that silence, an awe-inspiring silence, which told, more eloquently than words could ever do, that the army of Osman Pasha no longer existed as a fighting force, and that peace might from that very moment shine for centuries on devoted Plevna.

I write from records of the moment when I tell the tale of that surrender; how a white flag an hour later floated conspicuously from its battered walls, and then how there

rose a shout from the Russians, when they saw that flag hoisted, as could only be the shout of a victorious army.

Next, in hot haste, came a Turkish officer, also with a flag of truce fluttering in the breeze, to negotiate with reference to the surrender. Presently General Skobelev with his brilliant staff rode down to one of the two bridges which immediately outside Plevna cross the Vid, himself and his officers waving white handkerchiefs as they went ;



A FLAG OF TRUCE.

this was answered by a huge piece of white muslin, which, attached to a pole, now floated from another vantage point. Then came more horsemen, each with a flag of truce in his hand, galloping out to meet the dashing General, to inform him that the great Osman Pasha himself would follow. Then, roughly remembered by one who was with the staff, came these snatches of conversation touching the great event now so imminent.

“Let us treat him as the gallant spirit he is,” said one.

"He must have a soldier's welcome; the troops must present arms," said another.

"He is the greatest commander of the age," said General Skobeleff, "for he has saved the honour of his country."

All around was carnage and confusion—uplifted arabas, dead and wounded men, horses, and oxen everywhere. Rapidly advancing came two more bearers of white flags, one a rough-shod soldier, while riding near him was a handsome, fair young Turk, scrupulously well-dressed and most courtier-like in manner. Who could this possibly be? It was none other than Tewfik Bey.

"Osman is wounded," he said, in excellent French.

The concern was, of course, general. The next inquiry was as to His Excellency's whereabouts.

"Over there," said Tewfik, pointing to a small house facing the bridge.

And now slowly, rather in sadness than in the mad enthusiasm of victory, did groups of generals make for the house where the wounded hero lay, Generals Ganetsky and Strukoff settling the terms of capitulation.

In three great battles had he worsted the armies of the Czar of all the Russias, not only entirely changing their plan of action, but actually holding at bay from his stronghold at Plevna some of the finest troops in the world. Surely he well-sustained the title of Osman Ghazi (the victorious), by which, in the chronicles of war, his name will be handed down to posterity, and one of which no reverse—even the fall of Plevna—can deprive him.

The Grand Duke and Prince Charles of Roumania next interviewed the fallen foe who had been so worthy of their



A RUSSIAN NON-COMBATANT.

steel, each in turn congratulating him on his brilliant defence, thus ending with heroic magnanimity a great day in the world's history.

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There is a certain martial freemasonry about heroes which at such supreme moments as the foregoing eclipses altogether the comparatively petty rivalry of nations, an admiration springing up which banishes the elation of victory, a feeling of true hero-worship existing apart from creed or nationality.

By the way, talking of ties of friendship, brings one to the solicitude expressed by the gentler sex in war time for "those who fighting fall." I have been myself much with the Red Cross doctors and nurses, to say nothing of those of the Red Crescent, and think I never saw in any campaign such unostentatious devotion displayed as by the women of the many Russian ambulance corps which followed in the wake of the armies before Plevna. For her voluntary aid to the sick and wounded in war generally, England is, I think, *facile princeps*; but as far as patriotic devotion was concerned, the women of Russia during that great siege certainly held their own. Though little at the time was heard of them, and their glories were unsung, they were far from sighing for that bubble reputation which is too often the mainspring of good deeds. They came, saw, and conquered, as far as the hearts of men were concerned, women, in many cases of the highest rank, accustomed to all the luxuries which wealth and station supply, devoting themselves during that bitter winter not only to their husbands, brothers, and lovers, but still extending tender care to those

amongst the Turkish wounded who were from time to time brought into the hospitals at Sistova, Zimnitsa, and elsewhere. Such women, however, have no nationality; they rise to the occasion whenever great events touch the human heart. Indeed, I may say—

To the poet's assurance we all of us bow,
That when sorrow or anguish be-wrinkle the brow,
Those fair ones who, when we are living at ease,
Are fickle and coy and *not* easy to please,
Will be—'t was e'en so since the great world began—
Like angels of sweet ministration to man;
And I think, had you seen them as I have, when night
Spreads her canopy o'er the arena of fight,
On the blood-soddened field, midst the unburied slain,
As they listen for welcome old voices in vain,
You would say that when soldiers for fatherland bleed,
Such women are merciful angels indeed !

Pray follow me closely ; I haven't yet said
That the Holy Red Cross idly grieve for their dead.
While with womanly sorrow they mourn for the brave,
Their primary mission, of course, is to save—
To succour the wounded, to tend them with care,
To touch them with pity, support them by prayer,
To help to restore the maimed heroes who fall,
That again they may answer the clarion's call ;
Or if, in their agonies gasping for breath,
They but wait to obey the grim bugle of Death,
With gentle solicitude, mingled with tears,
They soften their passage to happier spheres.

Yes ; woman in trouble, in sorrow, in woe,
Is angelic indeed ; and this most of us know.
But yet, on the other hand, woman can be
A Pluto in petticoats—frightful to see !
Apart from those saints who, regardless of self,
Come to succour and heal, some come only for pelf ;
Their mission is money, and watches, and gold,
Which is cut off the uniforms, melted, and sold.
They affect the dead heroes, of course, though if they
See one who is wounded, and think it will pay—

Such facts are on record—commensurate gains
Have led them to tamper with jugular veins !
There are women and women, though happily few,
Who are found to belong to this vulture-like crew.
I merely suggest their existence, and now—
Place the chaplet of honour upon the chaste brow
Of the fair Rosierucian, whose merciful care
Brings Sunshine to Sorrow and Hope to Despair !

From a picturesque point of view, too, the women of the Russian Red Cross seemed (when nature combined with art) to excel their sisters in the matter of becoming costume, since the wearing of the emblem of their office, not only in the shape of an ordinary brassard, but on the breast of their white aprons, gave an additionally vivid touch of colour to those hospital wards, where, on their errands of mercy, they untiringly went from bed to bed. Thus, it has seemed fitting to add a sketch of one of them to my other illustrations; indeed, it would be ungracious in bringing this record of my experiences to a close not to do so.

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If, when the time came, the unconditional surrender of Osman Pasha created wonder, then, it may be briefly said, that he had no alternative. That sortie had been his final effort, by which he vacated (in concentrating his forces) all the vantage points from which he had so long kept the enemy at bay ; in the valley of the Vid, his last brilliant struggle for liberty having failed, he was helplessly in their power.

Yet should Osman's name be written in letters of gold by the historians of the future ; his magnificent defence ending, as one of the correspondents to the *Daily News* happily put it, "in a halo of disastrous glory."

Nor must it be forgotten that from a military standpoint he had, roughly speaking, nothing more than raw levies with whom to face well-equipped and thoroughly disciplined troops.

Patriotic peasants, rapidly educated in the arts of war on the field, were, with few exceptions, all he had to depend upon. Thus—it naturally suggests itself—what marvellous results might have been brought about had a well-trained army been at his command.

But this day of days in the world's military annals is already closing in; silent shadows are creeping over the surrounding hills, taking weird shapes, gliding like night birds with out-stretched filmy wings down into the valley of the Vid. Here are oxen, great meek-eyed creatures, slowly dying where they fell, forming as they did Osman's last defence. Then up the hill-side, stretched in grim disorder, are Russians, Turks, horses, over-turned arabas, and arms of all descriptions. Those shades of evening stealthily creeping on would have effectually hidden the horrible scene, had it not been brought back by the appealing voices of the wounded, who, in many cases, must have awoke as from a trance, induced by loss of blood and pain, to realise the terrors of the situation and penetrate the stillness of the night with their cries.

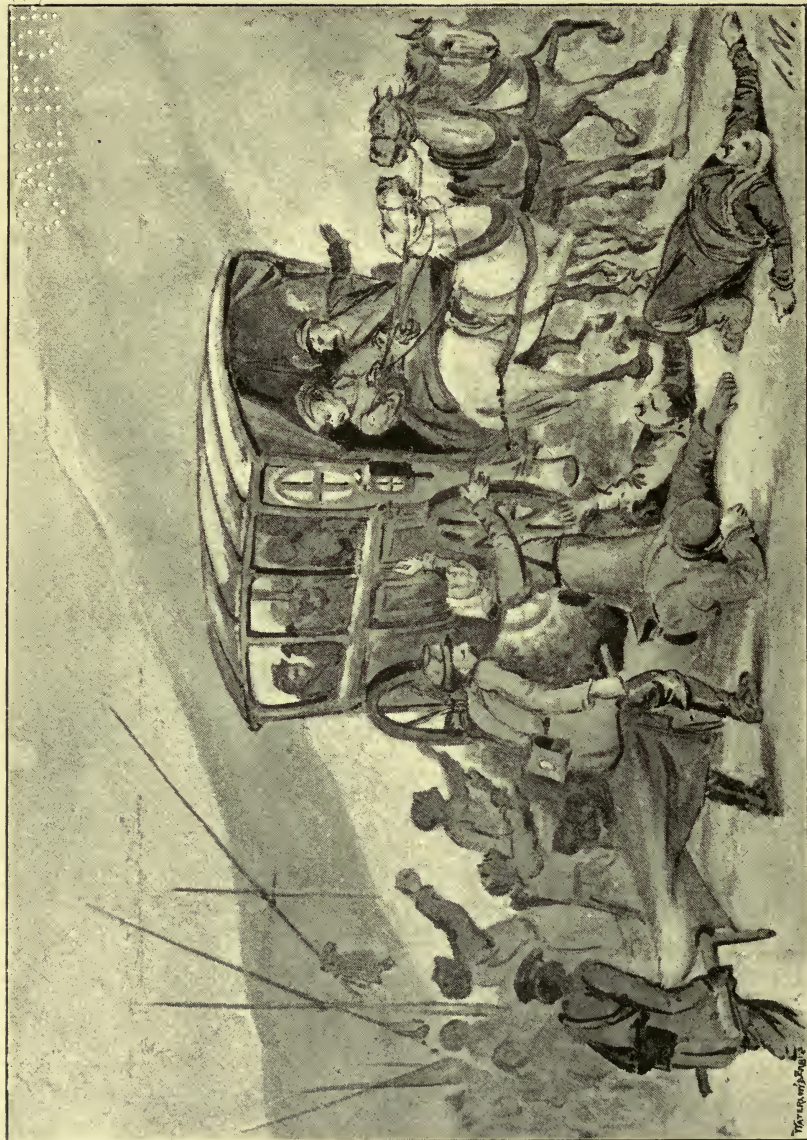
True, no darkness could ever blot out such a scene from one's mind's eye, even were the night as black as Erebus. Then, again, all was still, pending the birth of that smiling dawn which, banishing the black shadows of war, would herald the advent of long hoped-for peace.

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NO ROOM!

Cambridge Studios,

Linden Gardens, W.

It is a crisp frosty night, the fire burns brightly, throwing its fitful light and shade on many a memento of the vanished past, each appealing curiously to me as I glance from one to another, smoking the pipe of peace the while, with the blue clouds from which old memories mingle, losing themselves in quick succession, till they disappear amongst the rafters.

Before me, on an easel, is a full-length portrait of Hobart Pasha, to which I have recently been putting the finishing touches—a Turkish admiral, with all his honours thick upon him, as I first saw him years since at the War Office at Constantinople—a commission from him only a few weeks before his untimely death at Milan, when England lost one of her most devoted advocates, Turkey her ablest naval commander, and all sorts and conditions of men a thorough friend.

I am lost in the realms of long ago.

There hangs the quaint Asiatic camp kettle which played such an important part in connection with our evening meal at the front, while by its side, as if to balance its suggestion of sobriety, depends the bibulous-looking brandy flask from which I supplied that ill-fated Circassian with “fire-water.”

Saddle-bags of curious Eastern workmanship, which have in their turn been receptacles for every imaginable commodity under the sun, now form part of a trophy in which yataghans and other Asiatic and European weapons play a conspicuous part; a rudely-painted wooden Servian water-bottle, and a camel’s tail which I picked up on the

field of Zevin, adding two more to my collection of curios. A bright red Carlist *boina* lights up the opposite wall, surmounting a Russian sheep-skin greatcoat and several French cavalry sabres, which as the flickering firelight now and again catches them, bring back in shadowy array before me ghosts from the battle-fields of four campaigns; while over there in a dark corner, as if hiding themselves, ashamed of the deadly nature of their calling, may be seen a miscellaneous collection of arms of all shapes and sizes, from cross-bows to long Armenian guns and Berdan rifles.

Such are the blood-thirsty surroundings of the sanctum in which I sit smoking that pipe of peace, through the fumes of which familiar scenes and faces come and go in strange variety, till I am aroused from my reverie by my studio factotum who brings me in the evening paper. On opening it, my eye catches the following heading—"Bones from Plevna." The paragraph runs as follows:—

Thirty tons of human bones have just been landed at Bristol from Plevna, carted thence to Rodosto; they now go to enrich English soil. To those who do not give to such matters much consideration, it may be well to mention that 30 tons of human bones mean the skeletons of some thirty thousand men.

The pipe of peace had gone out; memory bringing back to me the heroism of those Moslems and Muscovites who had deserved so well of their respective countries. Then, presently, my musings seemed to strike a *poetic* chord, with the result of which I may not inappropriately conclude my wanderings on the war-path.

Some thirty tons of human bones, some thirty thousand men,
Who for their gods and fatherland did dreadful havoc then,
Fell for the flag of Islam, the standard of the Czar,
The Double-headed Eagle, or the Crescent and the Star.

Do Allah and his angels cast a glory round about
The heroes who at Plevna held Gravitz's grim redoubt?
How shall we gauge their glory? What halo may we shed
Athwart the silent sepulchre of war's unburied dead?

Each, with an invocation to his deity on high,
The soldiers of the Sultan and the Czar went there to die.
War, pestilence, and famine, grim death at every turn;
Where the frost of Plevna freezes and the fires of Plevna burn

Had you seen the stubborn Tartar and Mahomet's soldier sons
In the deadly din of battle, where the thunder of the guns
And the groans of dying warriors rent the air on either side,
You'd have seen how nobly heroes for their country's glory died.

Sic transit gloria mundi—the hero's left to rot,
While worms remain to chronicle the victory they've got.
The page of modern history was made by men like these,
Whose bones are shipped and sold in tons to us across the seas.

No sculptured urn records their deeds, no single line their loss,
Who fell in deadly conflict for the Crescent and the Cross.
And so in story and in song let future heroes find
The heritage of battles are the bones they leave behind.



BACK IN BOHEMIA.

CHAPTER X.

BOHEMIA — “PRINCESS ALICE” — DE PROFUNDIS — COLLIERY
DISASTERS—SCENES AT THE PIT’S MOUTH—THE PRINCE
IMPERIAL — A FLORAL TRIBUTE — PRINCE LEOPOLD —
GHOSTLY REVELATIONS—POOR BLENKENSOP—A PHANTOM-
FRIEND—CHUCKLING IN THE SPHERES.

SINCE *Camp and Studio* is in some sense a sequel to *Wanderings of a War Artist*, it naturally follows, from an autobiographical point of view, that the home life of the writer may, in its way, have as many points of interest as that of the tented field; indeed, a record of my wanderings would be incomplete if I failed to chronicle my *ad interim* occupations as special artist when, diverging from the war trail, I have from time to time trodden the flowery paths of peace.

Surely Bohemian life in London has its sombre shadows, its bright high lights, its telling little flecks of incident and sharp incisive touches as strongly marked after their kind as those in that series of sketches of camp life which have gone before; and my readers will in all probability be almost as interested in the doings of a “special” at home as when at the front, since he then, as an artistic free-lance, is much sought after in connec-

tion with the many heartrending catastrophes which from time to time occur, and which, having long since graduated in horrors, he is supposed to grapple with pen or pencil with the utmost *sang-froid*.

Shipwrecks, gunpowder and colliery explosions, famines, fires, and earthquakes, claim his attention at home and abroad by turns; indeed, I question very much if, with all my grim memories, there are any which can vie with those I have of the *Princess Alice* disaster.

Time can never erase from my mind's eye the scenes I witnessed during those eight or ten days spent busily plying my pencil on the Thames for the *Illustrated London News*. This terrible occurrence was infinitely more pathetic than war, as every phase of that horrible picture struck directly home. The battle-field was nothing to it. Men go there, leaving all tender associations behind, with the intention of killing, which thus becomes a natural result, but in this instance the poor victims had those who were nearest and dearest around them, who, unable to give a helping hand, were driven to the most indescribable anguish that eye could ever witness.

There were, however, subjects, untreated at the time, which I venture to introduce here, and which throw sidelights as it were on that lamentable event. One of these, of a waiting-room at Woolwich Pier, which was turned into a mortuary for little children; indeed, the greater number were babies.

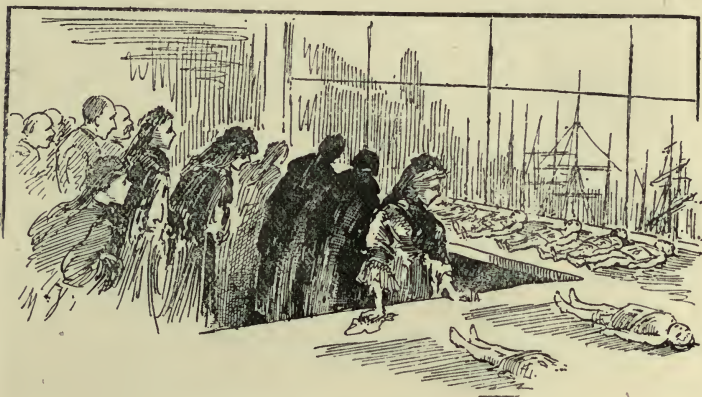
Had you been there and noted as I did the wistful, tearful faces of the crowd of mothers, who, happily themselves saved, now came to identify their little ones, you would never have forgotten it. Then, again, the aspect of the



THE AUTHOR OF THE TRAGEDY.

ordinary people you met in the street was enough to chill the observer to the marrow. Why every other man or woman you met seemed mad—some drivelling, some shouting wildly or groaning, as the case might be.

Probably the most terrible sight of all, though, was the saloon of that ill-fated vessel, where the dead lay embedded to their very armpits in mud, which, like a cargo of lava, hourly became more solidified. Then the sheds and the outhouses in which those never-ending

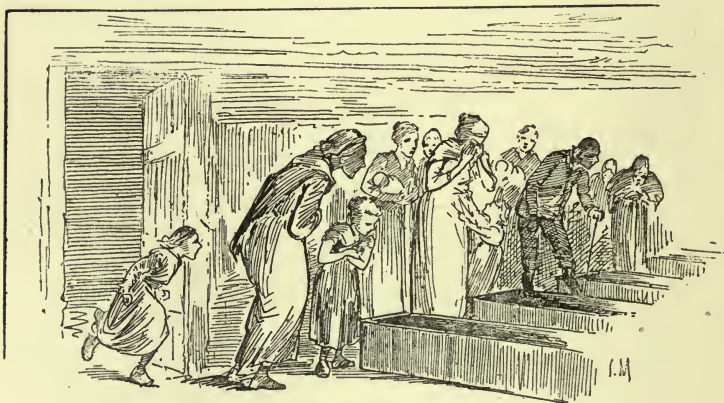


IDENTIFYING THE LITTLE ONES.

rows lay shoulder to shoulder awaiting identification and burial, while there, out in the twilight, quietly reposing in all its iniquitous, gloomy majesty, up a creek which seemed to be dwarfed by its mighty bulk, lay the *Bywell Castle*, the monster which had cast the shadow of death athwart eight hundred hitherto happy homes. Yes, it was the domestic character of the event which accentuated its horror, and this was felt most keenly when visiting that black museum of relics of the dead, relics which told all too plainly how,

with "youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm," that terrible death-knell had sounded.

Then, again, my memory carries me back to the many occasions on which I have sat at the pit's mouth, through the long hours of the night by the fitful light of lantern and torch, surrounded by a motley crowd of women and children, sisters, mothers, wives, and sweet-hearts, all crooning plaintively as they awaited the arrival of explorers from below. The rope suddenly becomes taut,



IN THE SHED.

the wheel revolves, and all eyes are full of eager expectancy; presently, indistinct sounds and voices come as it were from the bowels of the earth; the tension increases—some avert their gaze in very dread, while others crowd round the explorers as they arrive at the surface with a fresh freight of victims.

At the Porth colliery disaster, at the Seaham explosion in Sunderland, and elsewhere, have deeds of heroism been done, to which in some cases I have been an



AT THE PIT'S MOUTH.

eye-witness, which might well deserve the Victoria Cross ; since while deprived of the glamour of war, they would compare worthily with the most heroic deeds which our naval and military chronicles record ; deeds which can only be appreciated by those who have watched the rescuers volunteer (for all such service is voluntary) at the pit's mouth, to place their lives in the scale in the service of their fellows, to descend fathoms deep, in face of fire and fire-damp, in search of those who are perishing below.

Strange, too, are the altercations over the identification of the bodies, which, in most cases, are blackened and charred beyond all recognition ; this generally takes place in some convenient shed or out building where shells await the victims as they are brought to the surface. Indeed, I remember one case, in which parts of several human bodies were put into a hastily-prepared coffin, and became a matter of serious contention amongst several poor, half-frantic wives and mothers who clung tenaciously to the mere fragments of those who, but a few hours since, were with them in all the vigour of sturdy manhood, each declaring that was "him."

To return for a moment to the Thames. I was at the little town of Grays in Essex when the training-ship for boys was burnt to the water's edge. It was about 10 o'clock at night when I arrived there, and it was by the flames of the burning vessel that I did my sketches. The streets of the little place were full of distraught mothers and sisters, hurrying in their excitement they knew not whither. The small police station, a point to which many converged, was crowded with scared, anxious inquirers, who, by the

light of the element which had in many cases devoured their offspring, would make their way to the water's side, and stand in silent awe, watching those crackling timbers, wringing their hands in agonized supplication as they beheld the fiery grave of those they loved, and whom they were powerless to succour.

Or follow me again, and listen to the muffled drums and Dead March in *Saul*; follow me, I say, amidst all the sad and impressive surroundings of martial mourning. It is a royal funeral—that of the Prince Imperial to wit.

As the representative of the *Illustrated London News*, I necessarily played the part only of an onlooker, and was not a little surprised when, on the transit of the body to Chislehurst, I found, owing to the Imperial princes having taken to their carriages by the way, that I was left in the position, if not the capacity, of one of the chief mourners; several others having thus found themselves equally to the fore, notably one, a tall, quiet, delicate-looking man of rather foreign and distinguished appearance.

At this point, a rough of the worst type, not content with indulging in horse-play, much to the annoyance of everyone, broke the line of spectators, and with ribald jests and oaths, shouted to his companions—

"Come on, pals; they're only Frenchies as is a follerin'. 'Oo's a'raid?" proceeding at the same time to attempt a sort of double-shuffle immediately behind the gun-carriage. The next moment he was in mid air, falling with a heavy thud amongst the amazed spectators. That quiet, unassuming gentleman had been the propelling force; after which he resumed his place with the rest, while the astonished rough went slowly, sadly home, his insolent

capers over, to reflect on the advisability of thinking twice before making his next essay at playfulness.

Before reaching Chiselhurst, one touching little incident occurred which has imprinted itself on my memory. A very old French lady, in deep mourning, stepped out from the crowd, and hobbled, with the aid of a crutch-handled stick, towards the bier; with an effort which was almost too much for her, she threw a small bunch of violets on the coffin, and then, bursting into tears, went back through the crowd, which reverently made way for her, and was soon lost to sight.

It is strange to note that on occasions when one's surroundings are most grave, coincidences, insignificant in themselves, often attract one's attention. For instance, just as I remember, when following that apparently interminable line of victims in the *Princess Alice* disaster to their last resting-place, how the procession passed a dyer's shop, on which "We live to dye" was written in large letters, with grim appropriateness; so do I also remember on this occasion that the gun-carriage passed a way-side inn, the swinging sign of which was "The Fortunes of War."

Talking of Royal funerals brings me to the way I succeeded in obtaining sketches of the obsequies of the late Prince Leopold, at what appeared very like two places at once. These sketches were for the *Pictorial World*. The editor had not been able to secure the services of the artist he wanted to represent that paper at Windsor, while he had entrusted to me the debarcation of the body at Portsmouth.

Now, as the passenger train which followed the Royal funeral carriages (by which I should have gone) would not

arrive in Windsor till long after the procession to the Castle was over, it seemed manifest that I must confine my pictorial efforts to Portsmouth, and that the ceremony, as far as Windsor was concerned, must be left undone. However, I managed to obtain pictures of *both* events, and this wise.

Having made the necessary sketches at the landing-place at Portsmouth, and yet another of "Placing the wreaths in the guard's van," I watched my opportunity, and then, when the Royal train was about to move out of the station, quietly stepped in unseen and took a seat in a remote corner of that compartment, where I was more than half hidden by those floral offerings of which I continued to make pencil notes. In a few moments the train, which was, I need hardly say, an express, began to move; in jumped a guard, and one or two others. The next moment I was discovered sitting quietly in my corner. They were, of course, puzzled to know as to how or when I got in, or who I was. I knew there was no stopping possible now, so stepped forward and explained to the satisfaction of the guard and his companions, whom I discovered to be Directors, the *ruse* I had had recourse to. Thus it was that I alighted at Windsor in time to follow and take sketches of the procession on its way to the Castle, returning the same evening to the Strand by 7 o'clock with that double supply.

In this connection it is curious to add, and sad to remember, that not long before I had made sketches of His Royal Highness's wedding from about the same points as those from which I then depicted those obsequies—studies, verily, in "Black and White." Thus, the life of

THE FUNERAL OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.



a war artist "at home" has some flecks of sunshine, though Royal weddings do not often fall to his lot. No, it seems to me that, on the contrary, he is supposed to delight in all that is sad and terrible, as if in some previous state of existence he had been a vulture or carrion crow.

With reference to the very varied scenes witnessed by the special at home, much space might be occupied, and many interesting stories told; yet there are many phases of artistic life generally, and my own particularly, on which I should like to touch ere I bring this rambling biographical sketch to a close.

Till matrimony "marked him for her own," your scribe, whose pen and pencil wanderings on the plains of paperland have formed the subject of the foregoing chronicle, found himself as much the subject of fickle fortune and romantic incident in Bohemian London, as when in the wilds of Asia Minor. I think this may be said specially to apply to that large community of bachelor painters who, having a bed-room and studio attached, live somewhat isolated lives, being by day occupied with their art, and by night often remote from the ordinary haunts of men, lost somewhere in a nest of ghostly studios.

"Ghostly studios!" How vividly do those words recall to me an episode in my life I would gladly forget, concerning, as it does, an old friend of mine; it will answer the reader's purpose sufficiently well for me to re-christen him Blenkinsop. Not, be it thoroughly understood, that I am by any means a believer in ghosts, or one who has any inclination whatever to deal in matters supernatural. The occult sciences have no fascination for me. About visita-

tions from the dead there always appears to me to be a strange want of purpose, which would in itself be enough to make me sceptical; be not surprised, then, if I tell you the following strange story with a certain amount of hesitation, since it is averse to my own preconceived views touching the great beyond.

The plain, unvarnished tale is as follows. I had a friend who, like myself, was professionally an artist. He had, in a London suburb (no matter which), a studio. It was of wood, and built in the garden of the house in which he lived. I have been at many pleasant bachelor gatherings in my friend's *sanctum*, and do not remember any occasion on which that cheery old soul Blenkinsop was not one of the party. Blenkinsop was as much an institution at Bob Hackett's (I will call him Bob Hackett) as if he had been the palette Bob used or the easel at which he painted.

We all knew and liked Blenkier; he was quite an oddity in his way, his face being as characteristic as was his dress and manner. His relations had been so obliging as to die young, leaving him in possession of a modest competence; this was all that was known of him. He was otherwise an enigma, about whom it was impossible to come to any rational conclusion.

As far as his capabilities were concerned, had he been left penniless he might have become eminent; but then, on the other hand, he might not; so it is, perhaps, just as well that he had, as he put it, "enough to rub along with." Thus, that part of his day not occupied by reading the morning papers, was devoted to the studios of his friends, foremost amongst whom was Bob Hackett.

Though he knew nothing of art practically, he was always on the alert to be of service in connection with it. There was not a model's address that was not known to Blenkinsop, or broker's shop where bits of antiquity were to be picked up, which did not come within the range of his happy hunting-grounds.

In person he was spare, bald-headed, bearing no resemblance to an Adonis; a pronounced Roman nose,



BLENKENSOP.

a large mole on his left temple, and disproportionately large hands and feet.

I regret to say my hero will no sooner have lived in your vivid imagination than he will die—is, in fact, dead, and long since buried; he died in Bob's studio one quiet summer's evening, while looking over a portfolio of sketches, a new acquisition which had just, for a small sum, been added to his collection. It was a terrible

shock to my friend, who, after twice speaking to him and supposing him to be unusually engrossed, touched him. Moving the body, it immediately fell forward and lay prone on the studio floor.

He had died of heart disease, without the slightest warning, and with his death a settled gloom fell on our little fraternity. There was an uncanny something about the place now, which didn't accord with Bob's somewhat nervous temperament.

The studio was, as I have said, built of wood, and constructed so as to take to pieces; so it was packed up in many lengths, and advertised as follows:—

A WOODEN Studio with Ante-room, complete. Apply by letter to A. V., 24, Burlington Crescent, Bayswater.

Now, seeing this advertisement in a daily paper, I answered it, and was not, as you may imagine, a little surprised to find that it had been inserted by my old friend, and concerned a studio in which many of the happiest hours of my life had been spent.

Suffice it to say, we soon came to terms with reference to its transfer from Burlington Crescent to Chelsea, where, in the garden of the house where I then resided, it was, in due course, erected. I may say, incidentally, that the foregoing reason for its having been advertised for sale was not then known to me, my friend Hackett very wisely, while telling me of the death of Blenkinsop, refraining from entering into particulars which might prejudice me against purchasing the studio.

Now I had probably for some three or four months occupied my new quarters, comfortably situated at the end of the garden, when a pupil—a man of about thirty—

came one day for his accustomed lesson, with a view to which we crossed that intervening garden together. In doing so he stopped suddenly, saying :

“I see I’m preceded ; I’ll finish my cigar out here, while you attend to your first visitor.”

Quite mystified, I assured him there was no one waiting for me.

“Do you mean to say that’s not a man—an elderly gentleman, standing there ?”

I could see nothing. We were by this time at the very steps which led up to that studio door where my visitor was supposed to be standing, and I do not think I shall ever forget the expression of my friend’s face at that moment. He looked round at me as if for explanation. I could give none.

I again questioned him as to the shade, or whatever it was, he had seen.

“I saw him so distinctly,” he said ; “bald-headed, aquiline nose ; large bony hands, and a dark mark, like sticking-plaster or something of that sort, over his left temple.”

The description stood alone, quite beyond all argument. It was that of Blenkinsop to a T, even to the mole.

Remember, reader, at this time I did not know that it was in this studio that he had died. I confess I was a little unnerved, and for some weeks, when working there late at night, my fancy—nothing but fancy, mind, or indigestion—led me to suppose I heard queer noises, and I pictured, through the clouds of my dhudeen, the friends of long ago, but I *saw*—absolutely nothing. And now comes a curious coincidence.

In the common course of domestic change, the housemaid left, and a new one was procured—this time a country girl; and it so happened, that after her arrival, one of her first offices was to place my oil lamps (I never had gas connected with it) in the studio. On returning, she told me that a gentleman was waiting for me there. I couldn't understand this, as I had only that moment left the place; but she declared he was sitting in a corner, looking over some pictures in a big portfolio; and, when further cross-questioned, went on to say that "he was an elderly, bald-headed gentleman with a hookey nose, and a mark on 'is forrid."

I assure you that though ten years' campaigning had accustomed me somewhat to surprises, this simple country girl's corroboration of my friend's description, completely dazed me. I hardly knew what to think, but went at once to the studio—seeing nothing at first which struck me as in any way inexplicable. I was certainly not greeted by an apparition, as I half expected, though I was almost as nonplussed as if I had; for there, in a rather remote corner, a chair had been displaced, and in front of it was a portfolio, lying open upon the ground. I am prepared to swear that this chair and portfolio were not in that position when, ten minutes before, I left the room. This might have been pre-arranged by the maid had she not been a perfectly new comer, and knew absolutely nothing of the story.

That night, having overcome a strong yearning I had to go out and leave my haunted studio to its fate, I remained till nearly midnight "at the front," in the region of mystery, busily engaged on a wood block I had in

hand; then—still in anything but a comfortable mood—I was about to go into the house, when I bethought me of some sherry in a corner cupboard. I poured out a glass, when, just as I was raising it, three distinct thuds, as of a fist striking some soddened substance, seemed to come from mid-air, within, as it were, a few inches of my face.

I started involuntarily, and in doing so, spilt some of the wine. A grim idea seemed at this moment to seize me. This unseen spirit wanted to deprive me of that more tangible essence which I held in my hand. So (trembling, I allow, while I did it) I drank off that which remained in the glass; and then, reader—yes, then—came a *low, distinct chuckle*, equally in mid-air, so it seemed to me—a prolonged chuckle, terminating in a terribly distinct “Ha! ha! ha!” as if the pent-up spirits of this midnight joker knew no bounds.

Was the voice like Blenkinsop’s? It was; the same chuckle with which he told or listened to a good story, and which I have heard him give vent to many a time and oft in the old days in that same studio, when he was in the flesh.

Suffice it to say, in conclusion, I sold the place as it stood for £6 (it originally cost £80), and was, I assure you, very glad to get rid of it at any price, especially since I hear it has already passed through several hands, and has now, as a haunted studio, quite an established reputation. Remember, I don’t say *I* believe in ghosts. I *saw* absolutely nothing myself.



CHAPTER XI.

STRUGGLING HUMANITY—ARTISTS' MODELS—DOUBTFUL ANTI-QUITITIES—WAIFS AND STRAYS—"HEMMA'S TWO"—AN ADMIRABLE MODEL—ADA'S PRETTIEST POSE—A SCANDALIZED COMMUNITY—SKETCHES FROM LIFE—MUFFINS—POOR NELLIE THE MODEL—LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT—EAU DE VIE—THE COLONEL—A HAMMERSMITH DESDEMONA—A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT—THE STORY OF A GUITAR—SOMERVILLE AND CRUNCH AGAIN—A MEDLEY OF MODELS—A ROYAL MODEL—BEHIND THE SCENES.

MODELS are social mysteries, round about whom artistic interests gather, and who, in their way, have played important parts in the history of art at all times.

Concerning the ancestors of the present generation, I will, however, say nothing, confining myself alone to those who frequent the studios of the painters of the period.

There is a rat-tat-tat at the door of your *atelier*, and the small boy who plays the double part of palette scraper and page ushers into your little reception room "a lady as wants to see you, Sir"—and from whose card, on which her name, Blanche Vernon, is neatly printed, the uninitiated might suppose the bluest blue blood awaited you. But no; the idea is at once negated by the address (22, Dosseter Mews), which is not suggestive somehow

of consanguinity with Tudors or Plantagenets. So you tell the boy to usher Blanche into the august presence.

She is tall, graceful, and good looking, with a wealth of golden hair, arranged in artistic *negligée* round about her fair forehead. She has purchased a second-hand fur-trimmed cloak from the wardrobe shop round the corner, which very conveniently covers a multitude of shortcomings, lending an additional charm to that same grace-

ful deportment which her mother, who was a lady's maid, has endeavoured to cultivate.

"Morning," says Blanche, with an air of old friendship. "Any sittings? I've just been with So-and-So, R.A., and as I was quite close to your studio, thought I would look in, you know."

It is a curious fact that, no matter on whom she calls, she has always just left the studio of a distinguished R.A. Nor does she make a bad thing of



TILDA AND ELIZA.

it either. What with sitting for celebrities, when fortune favours her, and for smaller artistic fry at odd times, at a shilling an hour, together with evening sitting at art schools, &c., Blanche is able to be what the denizens of Dosseter Mews dub "a lady, every inch of her"; although

even that happy colony is not free from envy, hatred, and malice, as there *are* those of her own sex who whisper, in a loud key too, sometimes, that "*they* wouldn't go out muddlin' on no account, and that fine feathers don't always make fine birds, specially when its doubtful how some people get 'em."

The two next visitors of the same kind who call are of a very different type.

"Two young pussons want to see you, Sir," says the boy; and in this case I interview them in the ante-room.

They are nudging each other as I enter as to which shall speak first. They are cousins, are 'Tilda and Eliza Jane, and are really second-rate servants out of place, one of whom, having kept company with "a young man as 'ad a sister as was a model, thought she'd try 'er luck 'tween times too."

'Tilda eventually leads the way by asking if I "wants a model like 'er; or, if not, p'r'aps 'er cousin, 'Liza Jane, might suit."

They are totally different, save in the fact of each appearing to have been born several years before anatomy was invented—not, be it understood, by virtue of their age, for they are both under twenty.

Eliza Jane giggles while 'Tilda speaks, and this opera-



A BIT OF ANTIQUITY.

tion is reversed when Eliza Jane begins, a united titter bringing the interview to an end. As a rule, this sort of model finds little favour in the eyes of artists, reverting in due course to the scullery-maid origin from which she sprang.

Again, there is an old woman who was a model once, but whose day has gone by, and who ekes out a livelihood by bringing round now and again faded bits of silk and velvet, which she calls in cant phrase "Paintable stuff,"

which she assures you artists are only too delighted to get hold of.

I remember her attributing to a suspiciously modern though much battered teapot, which she brought carefully wrapped in many papers, an antique beauty, the price for which she raised accordingly. That teapot, she assured me, had been dug up at Herculaneum—thus opening up a completely new channel for speculation.



"HEMMA'S TWO."

as to the drinks of the ancients. She also came armed—should one happen to be "off" teapots as it were—with a very dirty piece of what had once been white muslin, on which marvellous half-lights were supposed fitfully to

play; and she also had in her pocket, wrapped in tissue paper, a pair of real French earrings, without which—or rather similar ones—no Normandy or Brittany peasant would venture beyond the threshold. Pre-supposing these many claims on one's interest might fail, she had yet one more resource. Possessed of the modest sum of 3½d. only, would I kindly *lend* her 8½d. till next Tuesday, as she had a sitting in the afternoon at Hornsey Rise, and it was too far to walk?

Then, too, there is the fussy, florid model, who sits for domestic subjects, and makes a very good milk maid, or, minus her head, a capital Amazon; though she depends rather on a niece and nephew, who always come round with her, than on herself. They are “poor Hemma’s two.” She explains to those who don’t already know it how Hemma was “took sudden bad with *brownchitis*, and died the Wednesday afore the autumn Bank Holiday the year before last,” and that she has “took ’em on, poor dears, so to speak, ever since.” Thus the three go from door to door soliciting sittings, that brown-eyed boy and fair-haired little girl (both under



MISS MONTMORENCY.

twelve), bringing her in a comfortable amount in the course of the year by posing for draperies, *i.e.* dressed in the clothes of other little ones, whose more fortunate parents have commissioned the artist for their portraits.

Next there is the pale-faced, nervous girl of shabby-genteel appearance, whose anxious appealing face tells all too plainly the story of want and woe. She is a lady by birth, too, one can see that at a glance, and so all the more sensitive when any little kindness is shown her. Although that she was not always a model goes for said, it will, perhaps, be as well not to peer *too* deeply into that oblivion in which she has evidently taken some pains to bury the past. Let that which she now is, an admirable model, alone concern us.

Not unlike her in many respects is Ada Montmorency, who, for reasons of her own, keeps the family surname of Smith in abeyance. The Montmorencies go where the Smiths fear to tread; though in this case it is her exquisite grace and piquant beauty, and not her Norman name which obtain for her the *entrée* everywhere. She is refined to a degree, and admirably adapted for innumerable subjects. In my opinion, however, Ada's most becoming costume is that of a Greek girl, one of her prettiest poses in which I have made a pencil note of.

However fascinating (mind I speak artistically) as she thus is, there is always a certain stilted something about the model when on the throne (model stand), which she naturally loses during the periodical "rests," which are appreciated by all to no small degree. Thus "Ada," in that same Greek costume, taking a glass of claret and a biscuit, or sipping a cup of coffee, seated on a mediæval

coffer, with her French boots and sunshade in the corner, may suffer from surroundings which are a little incongruous, but she is, nevertheless, at her very best at such times, and well deserves the niche she finds in this little gallery of models I have met, in my dissertation on whom I am anxious to convey to the uninitiated some few golden grains of knowledge which may profit them when they hear (as I so often have done) models underrated—nay, scandalized, by the busy tongues of those who know little or nothing of their inner lives.

In the Bohemian world they form a very considerable community, amongst whom, as in all others, there are a fair proportion of good, bad, and indifferent; but this I would most emphatically say that these same much-abused artists' models, male and female, will compare not unfavourably with their fellows, and, considering the unlimited freedom of their lives, are infinitely more worthy of admiration than censure, although much has been said and written to the contrary.

A cursory glance behind the scenes of artistic life may have been suggestive of conclusions, utterly unfounded, or the true story of some artistic ne'er-do-weel and soiled butterfly may have led to an equally undeserved tirade against models as a class. In my own experience, extend-



ADA'S PRETTIEST POSE.

ing over twenty years, I can record nothing which need bring the blush to the chaste brow of Belgravia, while I could quote many virtues which, in some cases, the maidens of Mayfair might wisely emulate. Speaking as I do of a *terra incognita*, I am very anxious that my readers should have no wrong impression as to models.

"It's quite impossible," I fancy I hear someone saying, "that *any* respectable young woman could submit to the



FIVE MINUTES' INTERVAL.

indignity of sitting to the opposite sex, especially if the subject be classical or mythological which has to be illustrated."

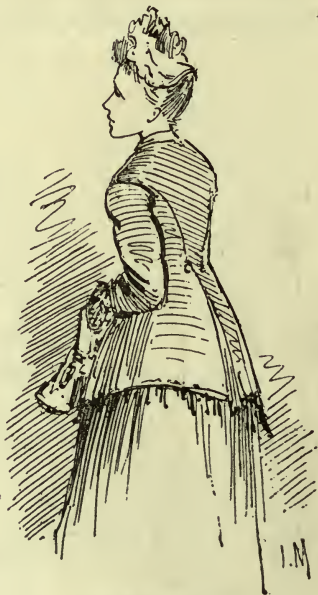
I allow, on the face of it, there seem to be difficulties in the way. Let it, however, be remembered that the very fact of her reputation being so assailable is her best protection; while the absolute necessity for painting from

nature, be the subject a Venetian flower-girl, a vestal virgin, or a Venus, cannot for one moment be questioned.

Then, again, save in his student days at the Academy or other art schools, the painter, unless he devote himself to classical subjects, paints only from the draped model. I remember how once—only once, to my recollection—a young artist, at a mixed gathering of students, boasted of a *liaison* with one of the sisterhood; he was at once put into Coventry by the rest, many of whom were well known, in the general sense of the word, not to be by any means *sans reproche*.

Think twice, then, in future, before condemning a hard-working community, without whom the painter's efforts would be poor indeed; recollect, you *do* sometimes purchase and admire his pictures—nay, more; follow me a little further, and become better acquainted, in doing so, with yet a few more artists' models; for, remember, these—however rough they be—are *true pictures taken from life of men and women I have known*, and for whose services I am indebted.

Take poor Mary Ann, for instance. No matter what her surname was. She had a father, a widower, incapacitated by illness from work of any kind, and to support whom



POOR MARY ANN.



MAID OF ATHENS.

she tramped long weary miles day after day, going from studio to studio in quest of sittings. Nor was this all; she was not only a very fair musician, but had a good voice, and was thus able to add to her small incoming amounts as a model, lessons in singing or on the piano to the children of those artists to whom she had made her accomplishments known. Indeed even to this she added still further, by becoming an agent for some enterprising city firm of tea dealers, whose samples she carried with her, wherever she went, in a small black bag.

You will hardly associate the two, Mary Ann as the Maid of Athens, and the same girl in ordinary costume; yet in the eyes of those who knew her privately was she ever the same tender-hearted, devoted daughter who spent the best years of her life (and a very hard life it was, too) in the service of her sorely-stricken parent.

While on the subject, I would hark back to yet another instance, which may raise the veil a little higher.

When I was a struggling student, having what was nominally a studio, but actually a back room, with a skylight added, in the neighbourhood of Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, there was one Nellie—Nellie the Model—who was as regular a visitor as the milkman to the house in which that unpretentious studio was, the whole of which, in fact, was let out in flats to struggling sons of Apelles, whose circumstances were, from what she gathered when she went her rounds, as well known to her as to themselves.

When they were in funds, Nellie naturally claimed precedence over passing models, it being quite astonishing how, as princess or peasant, she seemed equally well to pose.

Then, again, when dealers would not look at their productions, when such hard times came round as necessitated dining off one's great-coat, or looking on one's waistcoat as a relish for breakfast—in other words, confiding one's wardrobe piecemeal to the care of “one's uncle”—then would Nellie be to the fore in her true colours as a woman; obtaining sittings from others more favoured by fortune than the little coterie to which she attached herself, she was ever anxious, though her offers were not always accepted, to share her scanty earnings with those who most needed help.

Although not personally indebted to Nellie to this extent, I think I was one of her favourites, since when fortune frowned, and she had an inkling of it, she would come with a gentle little tap to my studio door, and ask if she could sit for me.

“You can pay me any time, you know.”

On several occasions, too, did she ask if I could give her a cup of tea, only to produce from her hand-bag, while the kettle was boiling, enough muffins and crumpets or sally-luns to satisfy the cravings of a giant. These she always “professed” to have bought for herself, only her landlady—she lived in Warren Street, round the corner—had let her fire out.

“Immodest, improper, fearfully unfeminine!” I hear someone say. “The little hussy, flinging her fickle favours round about her wherever she went.”

So be it, Miss Prude. I shall, at least, be true to the memory of poor little Nellie the model, whose very innocence of motive, save her natural impulse to do good, has brought upon her your righteous condemnation.

Suddenly—I remember, it was during a severe winter—the visits of little Nellie became few and far between—it was bad times with the students just then, and they missed her voluntary sittings. She seemed the only one who thoroughly understood the uphill work it was to live. At length she came; but her bright eyes seemed to have lost their lustre, a hectic flush having taken the place of her hitherto healthy colour.

Then came a blank; the weeks passed, and the light of Bohemia seemed somehow obscured by her continued absence, so one of us sent a note asking her to give us sittings on a certain day.

The note was unanswered.

The day appointed came and went without our seeing her. Probably some continuous sittings somewhere in the country had presented themselves, and she would return in a week or two; but it was unlike her not to have communicated her good fortune to us. So we waited; but Nellie never came.

Could she have abruptly left the neighbourhood without even having wished us good-bye? Someone called to inquire.

She had; she had left us without so much as an adieu. She was dead! She had been buried a fortnight.

That was a sad evening with many of us, as we smoked our pipes round about the coke fires in our several studios. Poor little Nellie—with her bright, cheery manner and hopeful assurances—would never come again to give us a helping hand in time of need. One or two of us, otherwise strong fellows enough, shed tears—we did, indeed. Weak—very weak. An absurd waste of

sympathy, wasn't it, Miss Prude, for one so very im-modest, eh? Yet, with all your vaunted virtue, when the great upheaval shall come, even Nellie—poor Nellie, the model—may (I only say *may*, mind) wear as bright a crown as yours, Miss Prude—who knows?

* * * *

By the way, years after Nellie's death, I was comparing the old with the new; the Bohemia of the past with the æstheticism of the present, when my thoughts took a poetic turn and developed as follows:—

Oh! where are the friends I so tenderly cherished,
And the pipes which I coloured long summers ago?
The too fragile clay has in both cases perished,
Yet the embers of memory still are aglow.

The second-floor back where I painted those cattle,
And sold to a dealer for what he would give;
And that picture of Waterloo—after the battle—
Will haunt me like shadows as long as I live.

Then how I migrated to Fitzroy Street proper;
How Nellie the model bought muffins for tea;
How, for weeks I went on without earning a copper,
Yet poor little Nell sat for nothing to me.

Then, how I obtained from a neighbouring broker
A Chippendale chair, bust of Ajax, and urn;
A shield and a fender, two rugs and a poker.
And gave him "historical works" in return.

How the coals, which the greengrocer sent in a sack to me,
Calling over and over again to be paid;
And the other small bills which I had, all come back to me,
As ghosts of a past which must never be laid.

And now, what a change! In a land where the lily
In too, too profusion the senses enthralls,
I've a sanctum bedeck'd with the daffy-down-dilly;
The plumage of peacocks emblazons the walls.

The choicest of china, on brackets, Queen Ann-ish,
The tenderest teacups on tables of buhl;
Thus the primitive joys of the student must vanish
Before the advance of this latter-day school.

But although I'm surrounded by lovely blue vases,
A slave to a teapot endeavour to be ;
Subscribe to those changes, whatever the cause is,
Which fashion insists on imposing on me,

Still in memory's mirror are blended strange fancies —
A nimbus has shed its ethereal glow
On Nellie the model, whose spirit entrances
As once in Bohemia long summers ago.

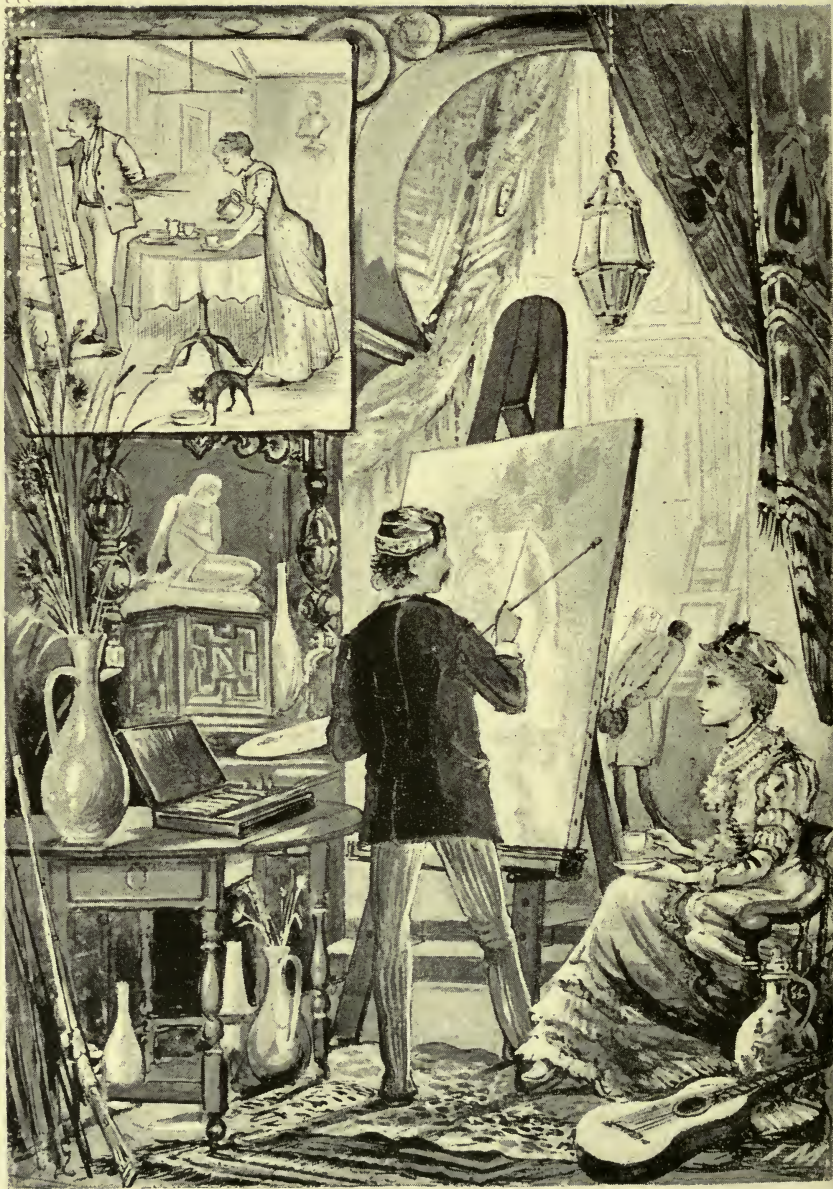
Of Italian models, there are enough and to spare in
London, both male and female ; the latter appearing, as



ITALIAN MODELS.

a rule, either to be more refined naturally, or belonging to a somewhat better class than the men.

In the early days of the Italian invasion of Saffron Hill, Holborn, which is their head-quarters, they were re-



SKETCHES IN STUDIO-LAND.

markable for wearing their picturesque national costume, but now-a-days they affect the conventional costume of Londoners, only bringing to the studios when necessary their sheepskins, bagpipes, gaiters, or, on the other hand, parti-coloured aprons, petticoats, and bodices, wrapped up in brown paper.

In my experience I never met an ordinarily pretty Italian model ; they are either perfectly lovely, or, to say the least of it, absolutely plain. Nor do the most beautiful, as a rule, retain their good looks after four or five and twenty.

I knew, some years ago, the daughter of an Italian doctor who was sent to a high-class school in England to finish her education, as far as certain accomplishments were concerned, prior to her returning to Naples, where her marriage, with an exceedingly unprepossessing and hoary-headed Italian nobleman, had been arranged by her match-making parents to take place, much against their daughter's will, she having for that rich, elderly Adonis the greatest repugnance.

Personally, she was of great beauty, and much beloved for her winning manners by her schoolfellows.

Now, it turned out that, with other advanced pupils and a chaperon, she was sent on certain days to have lessons in painting in the studio of an artist of some repute, and it was here, strangely enough, that she met her fate in the shape of one of that artist's models, a particularly handsome young man of about three and twenty. I knew him well, he had often sat for me. He was in appearance what one might conceive to be a fair young naval officer.

How it came about that they avoided the vigilance of her guardian and the artist himself must remain untold; suffice it to say, "love will find out the way."

They met from time to time clandestinely, and were ultimately married.

When her father heard of the unexpected turn events had taken, he immediately disinherited her, and nothing was left but to adopt the precarious profession of her husband, and exchange the prospective pleasures of "a palace lifting to eternal summers," such as Claude Melnotte describes to Pauline, for the second-floor back in Chelsea, where they now reside.

I shall again touch on the subject of Italian models, and would now call your special attention to a gentleman who shall be known by his military title of "the Colonel."

Dressed in the seediest, seamiest suit of black, with a hat which evidently owed its brilliancy to the application of oil; a jaunty, but faded tie, fastened with a huge brass pin, and boots, the ventilation of which let out the secret that socks were conspicuous by their absence—stood "the Colonel."

On the occasion of his first introduction to me, shabby genteel as he was, I could see at a glance that he was no ordinary model; indeed, so doubtful was I that he was a



"THE COLONEL."

model at all, that at once noticing my momentary perplexity, he said—

“ Ah ! that’s the worst of it—found me out at a glance ; people invariably do, somehow. Don’t look as if I’d been to Poole’s lately, still in five minutes men treat me as their equal, and become quite apologetic when paying me my ordinary shilling an hour, whereas, to me it’s a perfect godsend.”

The story of the “ Colonel’s ” life, briefly told, is a curious one. He went up like a rocket, and came down like a stick ; in India he distinguished himself so much in several successive engagements, that he won—not only rapid promotion, but the heart of the daughter of one of England’s most illustrious generals. For a time all went merry as a marriage bell ; then came the Bottle Imp and turned the tide.

Yes, it was the spirit of S. and B.—as he put it—which had been his ruin, cards, as a natural consequence, playing their part too in the dissipation of his means, till, beggared and miserable, he had to resign his commission. He next obtained some important civil appointment in Calcutta ; this, however, from the same cause soon fell through. Anxiety now began to tell on the constitution of his frail young wife, who ultimately died of a broken heart. Thus, utterly demoralized and crushed, he came to England, to find himself, as he said, very justly shunned by all who had formerly known him ; sinking so rapidly in the social scale as to be obliged, before many months were over, to take up the profession of an artist’s model.

I am here reminded that about the time “ the Colonel ”

was sitting for me, there was yet another model who had once been a fifth-rate prize fighter, whose physique and capacity for beer were equally vast. One day, returning to my studio, I was met by the charwoman—who had been paying her weekly visit—who gasped out as I entered—

“There’s two of ’em inside, Sir ; one in the hanty-room, and the other in the studyo.”

“Two what?”

“Two muddles, Sir ; both of ’em’s drunk. They’re fast asleep ; I wouldn’t have waked ’em for anything.”

On reaching the “hanty-room,” as the domestic drudge graphically put it, I found my herculean friend loudly snoring in unharmonious tones, sleeping off soundly the effects of his morning’s potations. I then betook myself to the studio, where I found “the Colonel” similarly occupied, and not having been content with the “twopennyworths” of Irish which had brought him to that unenviable condition, he had evidently been sniffing about in my cupboards during my absence for—yet another nip, as on the table beside him were a wine bottle and glass, the latter only partially emptied. From its appearance he must have mistaken it for sherry—it was pale drying oil.

I very vividly remember that particular occasion, since as he sat there, asleep as he was, he afforded me a subject for a picture which, when exhibited, won very favourable notice. There is very often a good deal in a name, although the divine William was not of that opinion, and very probably the title in this case “He loved not wisely but too well,” suggested by that bottle, may have had something to do with its success.

I was three hours laying in that picture, during which time no model was ever more quiescent. But to return to the latter end of the Colonel's wasted life. He seemed daily to sink lower and lower still, so much so, that I had at last to give orders that he should not be admitted. Then for a short time he reformed; with a suit of clothes which I gave him, and which to my astonishment he actually wore, it seemed just probable he might turn over a new leaf. Shortly after this, he came to my studio with a flower in his button-hole; he saw that I remarked it, so, in a stage whisper, told me that "she" had given it to him. "She" was the fair daughter of the keeper of a small coffee shop in Hammersmith, where he lodged. "She," moreover, like Desdemona—

Loved him for the dangers he had passed,
And he loved her that she did pity them.

They were married.

A year elapsed—he called again. At a glance, I saw the Bottle Imp had been bothering him. A dirty, tattered silk handkerchief was in his hand; he wept copiously—"she" was dead.

"Fatesh againsh me; mother-in-law shays 's my fault, shusan't m—arry if I cusan't 'ford it. I always (hic) hated mur—ers-in-laws. They've driven losh o' fellows t' despration."

I never saw him again, though, about five years since, I heard he had become a teetotaller, vegetarian, and, above all, a pew-opener; two kindly old ladies had taken him up, and were doing their best to make a saint of him. Let us hope they effected that which two wives had failed to do.

I heard also, thus partially reformed, his virtues grew apace ; he kept the children quiet in Sunday school, and assisted the district visitors to distribute alms, and then in the very odour of sanctity—died. A few weeks since, however, his death was contradicted ; he is said to be alive and flourishing, so I yet expect to see him any day at my studio, either distributing tracts with a pious smile, or assuring me that “ Muser’n-law’s mishtake ; orter b’ done away with by ac’r parlement.”

I must not forget another characteristic model—an attenuated youth, whose sole recommendation is his hair, which hangs in wavy curls over his narrow shoulders. Since he was nine years old, those golden locks have been his main support ; he is now eighteen, and till a short time since he stuck to them



HE LIVED ON HIS HAIR.

as his sole stock-in-trade. His parents did all that could be done in the shape of sailors' suits and knickerbockers, but these at last became too ridiculous. Then those ringlets were tied up and worn under cover of a conical hat, in consequence of which he had stiff necks and colds innumerable ; so down they came again till at last, becoming the butt of all the boys he met, he went one day to a barber's shop, and in a fit of desperation, had a close crop, becoming thus for the first

time for many years like an ordinary being. Othello's occupation was gone. Without his locks he was, as the Americans say, "nowhere in particular," so he got his late patrons for whom he sat to give him old brushes, paints, and canvases, and set up as a painter on his own account. He had seen them do it, and that was enough for him. I fear he will never be a R.A. His efforts do not look much like it yet; but—who knows?—he may.

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"So pleased to make your—Mr. Montagu, I think—Mr. Irving Montagu; ah, yes, of course—so very pleased to make your personal acquaintance, after all I have heard about you from my husband. Do you happen to have just a moment to spare? Ah, thank you; then I will come in, for it's a little draughty out here in your ante-room, and ever since his accident, which has compelled me to be out and about, I've suffered a good deal from rheumatism in the left shoulder; so I will, come in just for a moment, as I want to ask you a question, though George would rather starve than let me do it, that he would, if he only knew. Poor fellow! he suffers terribly."

The lady who in one breath addresses you as above is a diplomatist of the first water. Some years ago she was known throughout the length and breadth of Studioland as a clever impostor, for whom, however, old haunts were getting too hot, and this may account for my not having seen her lately. Her leading point, it will be seen, is the illness of her husband, backed up by his acquaintance with you. This naturally leads to inquiries on your part as to the nature of his ailment, which affords her the

chance of telling her story, which she does, more or less, as follows:—

“Lor’ bless me, you don’t say so! Haven’t heard of it? How odd, to be sure. So many eminent men know all about it, I quite took it for granted you did. Lor’ bless me!” Then with this short preamble, in which you blush to find yourself at least in the estimation of one humble individual an eminent man, she commences:—

“Well, you see, it was this way. Times were very bad owing to poor George not getting his picture hung at last year’s Academy, which took him ten months to paint if it took him a day, and a bill becoming due at about the same time which he—poor, kind-hearted fellow—had no right, being married as he was, to put his name to. One morning, I remember, he said: ‘As long as none of my old friends at the Hogarth and Langham are likely to find me out (and I don’t see why they should), I think I shall accept an offer which was made me yesterday to do some mural decoration in a house in Park Lane.’ Well, if you’ll believe me—and I’m sure you will—poor George got up at half-past 5 every morning, and was at that house at 6 to the tick of the clock, never coming home till 7 in the evening, till one day, to my surprise and horror, he came home at 3, or rather, I should say, was brought home in a cab. He had fallen from a high scaffolding and seriously fractured his hip joint, and there he has been, on his back, ever since, propped up on pillows, and fed with a spoon. Ah, yes; you may well say so. It has, indeed, been a sad trial to both of us, though I don’t mind what I do, however humiliating, as long as I can earn enough to supply that poor dear’s

necessities" (here come a flood of tears, which interrupt the recital for several seconds); "but now, Mr. Montagu, now that my guitar has gone, what *am* I to do?"

The guitar not having been before mentioned, you naturally make inquiries as to what a guitar has to do with it. Then she wipes her eyes and continues.

"Oh, there, I'm so flurried; I really hardly do know what I'm saying or doing. I ought to have told you that ever since his illness I've been going out at night, wearing a thick veil and playing my guitar round the fashionable squares, thus getting the wherewithal on which to live, which I managed to do without anyone being any the wiser, till a fortnight ago, when we had that fearful east wind—you will remember. It was then that I was laid up for four or five days with a touch of bronchitis, and had at the end of that time to pawn my guitar. Yes—would you believe I could be reduced to such straits?—I actually pawned my guitar, and since the small amount I got on it has gone, poor George and I have been absolutely starving; though I must say all the artists I've been to so far have, without a single exception"—this with a withering look at me—"subscribed to this list." Whereupon she produces at this stage a much-thumbed piece of white foolscap paper from a musty-looking envelope, on the top of which sheet, in large letters, is written: "We, the undersigned, have much pleasure in subscribing towards Mrs. George Perkyns' guitar." For Perkyns (Perkyns with the y) is the name she would have you recall as that of your old and injured friend—her husband. Then come the names of at least eight or nine Academicians and four or five Associates, with various small amounts attached to each;

and to these, if you are young and innocent, you add your name. The experience is cheap at the price—two or three shillings—after all, for you never by any chance see Mrs. George Perkyns again ; she has a most excellent memory, never calling twice on the same individual.

There are many models whose reputation does not extend beyond their legs or arms ; while, as I have already shown, there are others only valued for their hair, some again for their faces and not their figures, others for their figures and not their faces. Thus, with the expression, “A good arm, Sir,” a model will sometimes lay bare his biceps and shake his fist in a manner which might look like a dangerous menace to an outsider who happened to turn up at that moment, who would probably be equally astonished to see an otherwise circumspect damsel in everyday costume dilating professionally on the good points of her own calf and ankle, which by placing her foot on a chair she is better able to display. I once knew a model who was a mystery. Her figure was exquisite ; she had the contour of the Venus de Milo, but she had no head. Do not be startled by this—I speak professionally. She had the most utterly unpaintable head that model ever possessed, from the fact that she always kept a thick veil of double crape wrapped so closely over her tight bulky bonnet, that to see her features was impossible ; besides which she seldom spoke, and when she did it was always in monosyllables.

Of course, all sorts of surmises were raised. Was she too beautiful or too terrible to look upon ? Had she committed some social offence, and feared her face might some day

find her out—that she might by some unhappy chance be recognized?

There were stories innumerable told of the veiled model; yet, I believe, till she mysteriously disappeared from artistic circles some years ago, nothing whatever was actually known about her, save that in manner she was unmistakably a woman of breeding, whose age, when I saw her last, about twelve years ago, must have been two or three and twenty, as far as one could judge without seeing her face.

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One summer's evening, three or four years since, I was putting away my brushes after a long day's work, when my attention was attracted by a voice in the passage, the sound of which was curiously familiar.

"Tell him it's me—Somerville; Somerville—don't forget the name. Knew him in Paris, also, at Plevna, when attached to the Commissariat; saw his name and address in a catalogue, and, as I happened to be in the neighbourhood, thought I would run in. Odd, isn't it—very odd. Look sharp! and don't forget—the name's Somerville."

This was followed by a shrill whistle, which was responded to by the pit-a-pat of mongrel feet.

"Crunch, poor Crunch! Heels, Sir—heels."

By this time I had thrown down my brushes and welcomed my old friend, to my meeting with whom during the Commune I first alluded in a recent volume, and of whom, in one of the earlier chapters of *Camp and Studio*, I spoke as having been a bullock driver at Plevna and attached to the Cossack contingent; and now, for the third time in

my life, was I face to face with this eccentric rolling-stone again. This time I was able to be of some service to him, as far as introductions into the model world were concerned, and it was not long before he had no lack of sittings. Suffering, however, from that very prevalent complaint to which the Colonel, before his reform, was addicted, my old acquaintance and new *protégé* was not long in losing the friends he had made, and soon sunk into that Slough of Despond out of which it appeared to me, when I last saw him as being impossible to extricate him. On that occasion, I remember, he was in rags; the odour round about him being rather that of rum than of sanctity, as he said, "Odd—very odd; s'wicked world tish indeed. Crunch, poor Crunch! Crunch's teet'o'ler; mak'sh up f'me, yer know—mak'sh up f'me; odd, very odd, ishn't it?"

For the last time, "positively for the last time," I gave him a shilling, and from that time to this have never seen him again.

While on the subject it would be unfair to the doubtful reputation of an Albanian model of splendid physique, who has for some time been one of the fraternity, if I were to omit to mention him. He can make himself sufficiently understood in English to explain the grief he feels at that absence of perfect freedom which he enjoyed in his native highlands.

"It is wrong to cut the throat and stab—what you call stab?—ze man who insult you here in Engerland. I grieve for ze freedom of my beautiful Albania!"

He called on a friend of mine a short time since, in a towering passion. He had just come from a studio where,

after waiting two hours to see an artist, he was told that he (the artist) never painted Albanians.

“He call himself artis’—artis’!—and never paint Albanians! Ah, but I was happy. He has been in Italy and I, too, can speak Italiano; so I tell him that I pray for the time when I can have the artis’ who never paint Albanians alone—Ha, ha! yes, alone with me in my beautiful Albania.”

Then he took from its sheath a huge yataghan, which hung on the wall close at hand. He took it up tenderly and sighed over it sweetly, and thought of all the blessed privileges of his mountain home.

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The sheet of sketches of men and women to be met with in “model” society, are notes of a few faces familiar to many artists.

No. 1, for instance, is that of one who makes an admirable mediæval scamp, probably because in his present state of existence he plays a similar part. Never by any means lend him a costume because it happens to be just the thing an artist he knows wants, who will give him sittings in it which will enable him to tide over Christmas—do not, I say, do this, unless you never wish to see him again.

No. 2, Nasri “the Egyptian” as he is called, is a perfect philosopher, and most charming old gentlemen to boot; he has a magnificent head, and a certain courtly repose which suits for anything from the Commander of the Faithful to the first dragoman of the embassy. He came from Constantinople, and started in London a shop for the sale of Oriental goods; and as this failed, Nasri was stranded in the great city, and reduced to getting what few crumbs

of comfort are to be found in a model's life. In his early days he held several good positions in his own country, and was intimate at one time with State functionaries high in office, frequently now—on canvas—living over again the events of his earlier and more fortunate life.

No. 3 is Judas, so called because his face is supposed to be characteristic of that historic personage. Judas is as deaf as a post, and generally calls when you are most particularly engaged—some people always do. He at once proceeds to tell his oft-told tale to your studio boy in stentorian tones of how, "when he was a coster, if they hadn't taken his barrer for rent, he wouldn't 'a bin arstin' o' artists to give 'im sittin's.

Old Cox (No. 4) was known and liked by most people. I think I am right in saying that in early life he invested in the dried haddock and periwinkle interests, catching thus a dash of the briny from Billingsgate market, which, when in overalls and a sou'wester, made him a typical fisherman. Only about a couple of years since, the poor old fellow, returning in an omnibus to Kilburn, where he lived, was found by the conductor huddled up in the corner. Thinking he was asleep, he endeavoured to rouse him—he was dead. He had died in harness, and a well-known face was thus withdrawn from Bohemian circles.

No. 6 is one who, as a jovial abbot or "mine host of the Blue Lion," looks the character equally well, while near him will be found an Italian brigand (No. 5), who, though supposed to be a villain of the deepest dye, is, as a matter of fact, most lamb-like in his manner now, heaping innumerable blessings on you as he leaves. Perhaps it is a *per contra* account he is keeping with the D——.



SOME CHARACTERISTIC MODELS.

Of the Italian doctor's daughter I have already told you, and as she (No. 7) comes next, we will pass on to No. 8, a man who has thrilling tales to tell of Sir De Lacy Evans and the first Carlist campaign; while No. 9 is a certain Sphinx-like damsel, who, though her mother was Irish, makes an unmistakable Egyptian. This same mother of hers, by the way, was wedded to a swarthy African of distinction, whose sire having destined him for another disinherited him. Her mother, a lady by birth, for some time did her utmost to make ends meet in England, failing which she reduced the family expenditure by dying broken hearted; and the daughter has now for many years kept her father out of her earnings as a model.

Nos. 10 and 12 are two genial souls whose fancies are equally tickled, and whose expression of joviality stands them in good stead, the latter making a very perfect Friar of Orders Grey, who lives on something more than pulse and water. Nos. 13 and 14 are of the same individual, one August Austin; he, too, makes a splendid monk of the severer kind. No. 13 represents him in his ordinary walking dress, with a German student's cap jauntily worn on one side, as he may often be seen in the neighbourhood of artistic centres. His story is a marvellous one.

He was seventeen years a prisoner at Mont St. Michel, but how far love or war or both were responsible for his durance vile, or what the real points of his romantic experience were, will never be known since he tells them with much wild, excited gesticulation in a mixture of German, French, and English, which he blends euphoniously, but alas! not intelligibly. On ordinary topics, however, he is far clearer, and the very essence of patriarchal good nature.

Of the nephew of the late King Cetewayo, who was lionized for a season here in London I might also say something, for he, too, is not only a model but a musician and a poet. He was mislaid somehow when his august uncle went back to his native mimosa bushes; or perhaps he lagged behind, thinking civilization all round more inviting. Be this as it may, he now, between the bars and stanzas, takes what he calls an hour or two's rest here and there as a model, never failing to refer while doing so to that crown, if everyone had his own—he ought to wear as the direct descendant of the illustrious monarch we caught napping during the late Kaffir war.

No. 16 is a very pretty creole, who generally comes with a companion as plain as she is fascinating; while 17, who may almost be spoken of as sweet seventeen, is a Devonshire girl who for rustic subjects is beyond price, and compares curiously with No. 18, whom some have dubbed "Father Time," who comes next in numerical order.

By the way I must not omit Nos. 19 and 15, the former a useful Ethiopian, the latter a communard, whose chief occupation, when not sitting as a model, is denouncing the country which has given him shelter as "perfidious Albion"; and this brings me to No. 20, a gentleman who calls apologetically, wanting to know if you require anything in the "classical" way, takes off his hat, tells you "'is 'ed's considered very fine," and as a "Roman Senator or an 'Erceles or an 'Omer or a Hagermemnon he's always looked on as invaluable."

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If in this sketch of models I have met I have not done justice to their many merits, or fully expressed my ap-

preciation of the services they render to the full, it has been because I have inclined, by collecting some of the stories of their lives, to convey an idea of the characteristics of that much-mixed community. The fact of its being a general impression that to become a model is, as a last resource, something on which the impecunious may always fall back, leads to many who are in every sense unsuited edging their way into the ranks of the regulars, only to drop out again through sheer unfitness. But of professional models of either sex, I would emphatically say they are, as a rule, at least from my point of view, all that can be desired, and certainly undeserving of the stigmas which too often attach to them.



CHAPTER XII.

A KENSINGTON VAMPIRE. — CANT. — ANGLING. — AN ARTFUL DODGER. — MAN-TRAPS. — CUPID AND PLUTO. — BEWARE ! — LOVE IN A COTTAGE. — IN THE MESHES OF SATAN. — HOW I ESCAPED. — CAUGHT AT LAST. — GOING TO THE DERBY. — PASSING PICTURES. — SOCIETY'S SHADOWS. — A CLEVER SCAMP. — A GOLD MINE. — ART CRITICS. — DIVIDING THE SPOIL. — ARTISTIC SHAMS UNDER THE CLOAK OF RELIGION.

WHILE discussing in the preceding chapter the peaceable occupations of certain brigands retired from business, or who have, at least, given up the flowery paths of vice in their native lands for the small but less hazardous advantages of "sitting" for artists, it seems to me that I lead up to the many other and far more dangerous social brigands who, from time to time, cross the artist's path.

The so-called agent, for instance, for a provincial exhibition who occasionally makes a big haul of pictures which are to arrive, carriage paid, at so-and-so, before a certain date, which is arranged to be at least a month prior to the opening of the supposed exhibition, during which time the pictures are in various ways disposed of, while the so-called agent for a council or committee, who have no existence beyond printer's ink, makes off, only to spring up elsewhere in some other guise.

Then, again, there have been, to my knowledge, and probably still are, men who prostitute their talents by producing for dealers such marvellous imitations of certain latter-day painters, such as Turner and others, that they have sold over and over again as originals.

There are others, too, who, in all sorts of ways, try to circumvent the, generally, most unbusiness-like painter, and get him, by hook or by crook, into their meshes—in illustration of which, although in this case it does not concern an artist, I may tell a true story of at least one Kensington vampire.

Oh, no ; certainly not. I have not the remotest intention of describing one of the flat-nosed, blood-sucking beetle-browed, web-winged community ; it is a vampire of far more formidable dimensions, and one capable of infinitely greater mischief than the *vampyrum spectrum* is. The creature to which I refer, whose very shadow is as poisonous as the upas tree, whose touch is as fatal as the viper's sting, is an animal, forsooth, rejoicing in the simple patronymic of—Rogers, with an oily, smiling countenance, and feelers which, if unseen, are not unfelt, and a sucker none the less potent because invisible to the eye.

He is by profession an agent—a general employment agent—who is on the look out for whom he may devour from Monday morning till Saturday night, and I say this advisedly, because on Sunday he allows his appetite for poor humanity to rest, rust, or sharpen, as the case may be.

Rogers—Samuel Rogers, Esq.—is a stout, well-dressed, bewatch-chained vampire, who lives in that older part

of Kensington affected chiefly by retired army men, doctors with large practices, and old maiden ladies, whose affection for poodles is only exceeded by their love of scandal; not that its malicious breath ever reaches our friend Rogers—how could it? To see him on Sunday morning going to St. Andrew's, would in itself reassure the most suspicious. That exceptional umbrella, that placid, benevolent smile, each bear the hall-mark of virtue, at least on the surface, besides which, the outside of number 27, Lorrimore Terrace, would be enough, if anything else were indeed required, to place him beyond suspicion.

The small, unpretentious brass plate on the door, on which S. Rogers, L.F.B., M.T., whatever that may mean, is to be found in small black letters, has an air of respectability about it which is most inviting; the well whitened door-step, too, plays its part, together with the cane window blinds and substantial damask curtains, in giving a character of quiet repose to the whole place. Let us enter.

There is a blazing fire in that comfortable dining-room, where office chairs line the walls, while an office table covered with papers and backed by innumerable pigeon-holes, on which are piled old directories, files (probably of unpaid bills; but, hush! not a word—they are very effective), and large bundles of blue papers carefully tied up with the most official-looking red tape. Sealing-wax, a speaking-tube, and other similar etceteras go to complete the material "properties" with which our social shadow plays his part; for just as Spring-heel Jack requires phosphorus, a dark lantern, and a sheet, so does this gentle-

man, whose profession comes under the heading of "general agency," require the surroundings I have named to ply his trade. The only account he really does pay is that of the little newspaper shop round the corner. The *Times*, the *Daily News*, *Telegraph*, and *Chronicle* are regularly sent each morning, and as regularly settled up for each week; for are not they the great backbone on which Rogers works his spells—the superstructure on which he builds his many and subtle schemes?

Breakfast over, he is soon deep in their advertisement columns, from which he culls the seeds which are soon to blossom into a golden harvest.

The young widow who wishes to become housekeeper in a quiet family is communicated with, with a view to being introduced to the "middle-aged widower" who requires a governess for his two children, while this gentleman, of course, receives a line to the effect that "a lady (a widow), young, amiable, domesticated, and passionately fond of children, is open to such an appointment as the one he advertises."

Thus he brings from time to time the opposite poles to bear on each other, never forgetting to extract his fee from each. Servant girls (these are polished off by Mrs. Samuel in a far less pretentious back parlour) are also interviewed, and copies of extracts (on payment of 2s.) from that morning's paper handed over to them. Thus a perpetual influx of applications and fees takes place, and the little slavey in the mob cap has to leave the bed-rooms till the afternoon, so steadily is she occupied answering the hall door from 11 till 2 P.M.

Rogers, being an expert, has several ways of landing his

fish. To the poor confiding, weak creature who has spent her life in a country village, and who has just succeeded, on the death of her only brother, to the sum of £120, he puts matters in the most roseate hue. A philanthropic elderly gentleman has a brilliant idea by means of which, if he is able to obtain the temporary loan of a hundred pounds for current expenses, he will not only be able to return the lender a hundred per cent. in a few months, but benefit humanity at large to an extent satisfactory beyond all description to all parties; the result being that the philanthropic gentleman, whose kindly scheme unfortunately—through no fault of his—fails, is unable to come up to time either with regard to principal or interest. Not so, however, with those fledgelings who, by paying a premium, are to be inducted into the mysteries of art or science which will doubtless result in fortune. These have to be played; they want angling.

To give colour to the affair, the agent secures the innocent assistance of a professional man, to whom he writes, say, that "Having heard of the high repute in which he stands, &c., &c., he would be glad to see him with reference to So-and-So." His negotiations have thus an air of truth about them; and if sufficient money is to be made out of So-and-So on the one hand, and the professional man on the other for the introduction, the matter may wear the outward semblance of an honest transaction. If not, "incidental expenses," at least, have represented a sufficiently large sum to satisfy the most avaricious of the vampire agent fraternity. Indeed, what with the playful peccadilloes of the male species and the insinuating way in which their better halves bleed the

more easily hoodwinked servant girls, the little nest is soon well lined, and it is not before he is thoroughly over-gorged that he is caught napping, and has to make a futile attempt to explain away to the local magistrates the shortcomings for which he is sent to trial.

Oh! and then one must not forget that, amongst other things, he professes to be an ex-officer in the army (? which), and the author of several known works on Politics, War, and Social Progress. When by chance he comes in contact with a man of the world, it is astonishing how sparing he is with his cheroots and sherry, and how soon it appears evident to him that he has nothing going in that gentleman's way; but as a rule the people he comes across prove fair game, and are bagged accordingly.

One life story, traced briefly from its commencement to its close, will suffice to show the influence our social vampire has on our social system.

Young Markham, one of the best of fellows, was, as is not uncommonly the case, at the same time one of the most unfortunate. He had stopped at nothing, and failed equally in everything save and except in the choice of a *fiancée*, and even this weighed upon him as a sort of affliction, for no possible prospect presented itself of their being united at the time of which I write, he not having any appointment at that period, and having, moreover, reduced his small post-office savings to the sum of £5 14s. 9d.—a bad basis on which to enter the matrimonial lists. Despair had, indeed, got very much the better of him, when one morning

hope was revived by seeing the following in a morning paper :—

IMMEDIATE (lucrative) appointment for young man of good address and fair education. Come at once to EROS, 27, Lorrimore Terrace, Kensington.

Eros ! of all names the most propitious. An hour later he was waiting on that spotless doorstep. Let us follow him to the snug, office-like dining-room, into the presence of that great arranger of other folks' affairs.

"Good morning, good morning," said the agent, in his blandest accents. "Let me see, now, let me see ; I have so many applicants that I mix names rather. Ah ! here we have it : Mitchell—Melville—Maitland—Markham—Markham, that's your name I think ; so pray be seated, my dear Sir, and let us chat the matter over. You smoke ? Just so—try one of these ; and now to business. Let me see, I think you said you were married. Oh, not married. No—exactly so, I was mixing you up with my last client—not married, of course ; only some prospect of it, eh, Mr. Markham. Pray don't feel it necessary to observe any reserve with me ; I'm an old stager, you know, quite an old stager. What I want to come at is this, are you really anxious to settle down comfortably, either as a bachelor or a Benedict ? There now, that's at the bottom of the whole affair."

Of course poor Markham assured the wily one of the one aim of his life, while the other went hastily to the point.

"Just so ; I thought so. Now it appears to me—I don't know, of course—but, I repeat, it appears to me that you will be just the one for the vacancy I have to offer.

Elderly man, suffering from *malade imaginaire*, with literary tastes, wants a gentleman to read to him, answer his letters, revise his MS., in short, to be his amanuensis for some four or five hours daily; lives in park-like grounds, charming residence, with a delightful little eight-roomed cottage, with bath-room, hot and cold water, and garden—oh, yes! long garden; all this for the fortunate fellow who can win over his wife, and thus secure the post. The salary—£150 to begin with—will increase at a good ratio, and who knows but this eccentric old fellow may not leave a plump portion in his will to a devoted scribe? Ah! I see you like the prospect. Married or single, I should say it would be snug quarters, and the sort of post I should have jumped at myself when I was a young man. Now, you write at once to E. F., Post Office, Balham—all communications to be made to post office in first instance. Mention my name—I've known Grigson some three and twenty years; yes, mention my name, and say you will hold yourself in readiness for an interview here at any appointed time, and when you get it, bring me the reply."

It was with a light heart and beaming countenance that young Markham left 27, Lorrimore Terrace. On the following morning a letter promptly arrived in reply to his of the day before, to the effect that Mrs. Grigson will be at their mutual friend's to meet him at 2.30 that same afternoon.

Markham, as may be supposed, is there at 2, looking anxiously out of window into the muddy street. He is not kept long in suspense; in a few minutes a hansom drives up, much handshaking takes place in the hall of No. 27, and the arrival is announced of the wife of the

gentleman with literary tastes, who is forthwith introduced to, and left with Markham. She is amiability itself; he is, oddly enough, just the man her husband is likely to require. He believes implicitly in her judgment, and always abides by it; in short, Mr. Markham may, out of thirty-four applicants, consider himself the favoured one.

Mr. Grigson is just now at Bournemouth; will return in about three weeks, and on that day—say Friday the 29th—herself and her spouse will be delighted to welcome him. At this point in comes our friend the agent, who makes a passing reference to Markham's being engaged in two senses of the word; at which Markham blushes, and Mrs. Grigson says she cannot imagine a more comfortable berth for a young married man. All goes merry as the proverbial marriage bell that day with our hero and the fair one of his choice. Indeed, the prospect of love in a cottage, with a long garden and a bath-room with hot and cold water, is almost too much for them. The cottages they build in the air that day are all—well, all their fancy paints them; and it is not till the next morning that a cloud, a slight cloud, ruffles their domestic horizon.

Markham receives a note by the first morning post from the vampire (the metaphorical introduction of his sucker) saying, that while he congratulates him most heartily on having been the chosen candidate, he at the same time reminds him of a little arrangement which they made, of a purely business character, by which, on obtaining the appointment (only on actually obtaining it, mind), a nominal sum of eight guineas was to be forthwith paid. This, at least, was the form which a most casual reference to money matters now assumed. Nor could Markham, as he put it

to himself, well expect anyone to interest himself on his behalf for nothing; so, pinch as he might, he made up his mind to pursue the one honourable course open to him, and let the agent have his due. Poor Ethel was now consulted, and her little savings of three pounds were withdrawn from the money-box on the narrow mantelshelf of her scantily-furnished bedroom. With this and the whole worldly possessions he had himself, Markham proceeded to the nearest post-office and sent the amount off under cover of a registered envelope to "the vampire."

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A week, fortnight, three weeks now elapsed, and no communication coming from Balham, Markham was on the point of rushing off to the obliging intermediary when a letter did arrive from Mrs. Grigson, black-edged and dismal-looking enough goodness knows. It ran as follows:—

MY DEAR SIR,

I feel sure you will join with me in my sorrow. My poor husband, Mr. Grigson, departed this life last Tuesday morning after a sudden seizure which is supposed to have been due to an affection of the heart, from which he has, poor dear, for some time past suffered. Under these circumstances the necessity for your kind offices is, I need hardly say, at an end.

I am,

In the deepest grief,

Faithfully yours,

EMILY GRIGSON.

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The supposed Mrs. Grigson, *alias* the vampire's wife, finding with her spouse that Kensington was getting too hot for them, left for a lengthened sojourn in the United States, and would probably have safely arrived on those hospitable shores had not Inspector Twicher, of Scotland Yard, been one too many for them, and reminded them on

their arrival at St. George's Docks, Liverpool, of several little peccadilloes which required explanation.

I had myself a personal acquaintance of short duration with this Kensington vampire, prior to his having been thus oppressed by the torrid atmosphere of Kensington. He at first wrote me, referring, in passing, to my reputation, &c., &c.—regretting, at the same time, that an attack of gout prevented his calling on me at my studio—would I, if near, pay him the compliment of looking in? I looked in. It appeared to be a matter of portraiture. A dear old country friend of his would be in town for the Academy—would, in fact, call on me any time convenient to me within the next fortnight. He could not afford much. Would I agree—quite an exceptional thing, you know—to paint a group, himself and his favourite daughter, for so small a sum of £450?

Suffice it to say, I did agree; 10 per cent. was the small commission he himself required for the introduction. The transaction so far settled, he next inquired what day his friend should call on me; and, as we had so satisfactorily come to terms, would I write him a cheque now?

I would not. No, I preferred making my own terms—when the picture was paid for. Whereupon the scene changed. He turned round and rated me as illogical, a fool blind to my own interests, and he is no doubt still doing so.

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In referring to the several ways in which traps are laid for the unsuspecting, I just now made reference to certain impostors who have at various times made art herself their

handmaid, in producing pictures so marvellously like those of comparatively modern men that they effectually deceive all save the cleverest experts; and if this be done with regard to these painters, how much oftener is it done in connection with the older masters, copies of whose works, painted on worm-eaten panels of the period, and baked till they have all the appearance of having been blistered and cracked by Father Time, seem, in many cases, to be beyond detection altogether, the very dust of ages seeming to have so worked its way into them as to make the fact of their having been painted, probably within the last six months, quite beyond ordinary belief?

That I may more clearly convey to you some idea of the subtle ways in which such pictures are sometimes "palmed," I will put into narrative form a perfectly true incident which, some years ago, came under the notice of the police, and which led, on a similar charge, to the arrest of two or three members of a notorious long firm of accomplished swindlers.

It is 7 A.M. on Derby day. The last Punch and Judy man, with poor dust-begrimed Toby bringing up the rear, his frills a sad satire on his lack lustre eye, has just passed me. Following comes, at full speed, a smart turn-out, with four gentlemen with exceptionally white linen and huge cheroots; they are succeeded by the Huckleburys—father, mother, George, 'Arry, Maria, and the baby—who have packed themselves into a cart otherwise devoted to the greengrocery interest. The association may even now be seen by the huge green and orange ostrich feathers, which, failing to flutter gracefully in the breeze, out of sheer defiance to the wind insist on standing bolt upright upon

their stems, a noticeable peculiarity with such feathers on such festive occasions. To-day the family have thrown aside their aprons, put up their shutters, and bedecked themselves with roses (paper ones) rich and rare, and given themselves up to the enjoyment of the carnival in their own innocent way.

"I works 'ard, I does," says Huckelbury; "aye, 'ard as anyone; but what I says is this, I says, when as I ham hout, I ham hout. There's no two ways about me, so there."

Now although most of the jugglers, fire-eaters, gentlemen of the three-card persuasion, &c., are either there already or converging (after making a night of it on the road) on the course, there are yet some who, footsore and weary, still have long miles before them, and who explain how "professional engagements" detained them in town yesterday. Amongst these is the cornet-player, who is weak at the chest, and who would have been killed had he camped out, whose wife and four little ones saw him off from the back street in Camden Town in which he lives long before the earliest milkman dreamt of going his rounds.

Poor fellow!—he is the gentlest, meekest embodiment of long-suffering. How little does it concern him if it is "two to one bar one on the favourite," or if, on the other hand, it is not; Epsom to him means so many stock tunes and stray coppers from charitable winners, with a corresponding amounts of cuffs and hustlings from uncharitable losers. But we have no more time for meditation, for here they come in downright earnest, costermongers and their donkeys, hansom cabs and covered vans, wagonettes, victorias, and four-in-hands—here they

are, all jostling and jingling along the great highway, which—typical of life, is one vast whirligig, the end of which is—dust.

Yes, what a dust they are literally kicking up, over there. Look at Melton Digby's team. Those greys are the pride of the road, even on Derby Day, when there is good horseflesh to the fore. See how dexterously he handles the ribbons, as he takes that well-loaded and amply-provisioned four-in-hand through the perfect maze of conveyances by which it is surrounded. Let us follow the fortunes of Melton, and see where they will lead us; let us join that merry party an hour before the race; let us discuss lobster salad and champagne with them, at this same Epsom meeting.

"Field against the favourite, Colonel," said Melton, as he struggled with a ham sandwich; "or what do you say to 6 to 1 on?"

"I never bet," coolly replies Colonel Foxley (U.S.A.). "Everyone to his taste, you know; the picturesqueness of the scene itself is to me sufficient recompense for a visit."

"Ah, by the way, you know something of Art, don't you, Colonel? I think I've heard you say you paint."

"Well, as far as that goes, I can hardly profess to paint. True, I'm passionately fond of it, my life having been spent—when duty has not called me elsewhere—in the studios of my friends. Yes, I'm passionately fond of it, and may with all modesty say I am, to a certain extent, a judge."

"What culture!" whispers Lady Margaret to Mrs. Ponsonby de Wilkyns on the box seat as Foxley concludes.

"Charming—perfectly charming!" responds Mrs. de W.

“And he has won golden opinions, I hear, in the States,” broke in young Granville Gudgeon, “alike with sword, pen, and pencil.”

“An Admirable Crichton,” said someone else ; and so, by rapid degrees, the hero of the day—as far as that four-in-hand was concerned—became, *par excellence*, the incomparable Colonel, who had by this time insinuated himself into the good graces of all present. Anything, from uncorking champagne to talking politics, could he do with equal *finesse*. Nothing came amiss to him, unless indeed it were betting, or those several excesses which others of the party were too prone to indulge in. The Colonel smoked the mildest cigarettes and drank Sauterne ; was as self-possessed as a bishop at an ordination or, when occasion required it, as gallant as Beau Brummel and as perfect a wit as Sheridan himself.

Who lost or won, or what happened in that respect on this particular Derby Day, concerns me no more than the reader, since our story—strange to say—has as little reference to Epsom Downs as it has to the Sea of Marmora, our plot hinging on the return journey.

At a small wayside inn, on the outskirts of the village of Morden, it was suggested by the humane Colonel that Melton Digby should pull up and bait the horses, with a view to which he himself alighted to negotiate with mine host, who was busy serving a miscellaneous crowd over the rustic counter.

“Really a charming man—Colonel Foxley,” was echoed and re-echoed by everyone on the coach, while he was thus engaged. “Such a cosmopolitan, too ; see, he is on terms of as perfect equality with the landlord of a way-

side inn as he would be with a Grand Duke. Certainly, a genuine Transatlantic gentleman is second to none."

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"Raffle—Raffle—now don't forget, or you'll spoil everything. Raffle's the word; and your great-grandfather—who was rich at one time—squandered everything away; everything but that, which he left to your grandfather, which he left to your father, and which your father left to you. There—you thoroughly understand, don't you, eh?"

Having delivered himself of this mysterious harangue, Colonel Foxley rushed excitedly back to his friends, while the ostler looked after the creature comforts of the four greys.

"Perfectly marvellous!" said the colonel. "A wealth of colour! An astounding discovery! A positive gold-mine!"

"Gold mine!" said Melton from the box-seat. "What on earth are you raving about?"

"Something very like it," said Foxley, with a suspiciously cunning shake of the head. "Hung up in the bar over there is, if my judgment goes for anything, a veritable Raphael; a perfect masterpiece, I assure you. This, however, is not a day on which one can discuss Art with a publican; but it's a find, it is really, a wonderful find, which must not be lost sight of."

With this Foxley, having given largess to the ostler, remounted, and an hour and a half later the whole party were dining comfortably at Melton Digby's house in Berkeley Square.

Slight reference was made to the incident during dinner or at dessert, but later on, when the ladies had retired

and cigars were introduced, the subject again cropped up; and the long and short of it was that Granville Gudgeon, who prided himself on his knowledge of Art, was led into suggesting a visit to the hostelry where this choice example was to be seen.

"If you are really inclined to buy, do so, but not on *my* recommendation, mind; though, for my part, I consider it a moral certainty. Whoever becomes the fortunate possessor, let him secure the opinion of an expert, such a man for instance as Rokeby, you know—Melton's friend, I mean—who has made Raphael his special study. Do you think, Digby, you could persuade him to join us at a previously-arranged lunch, and get him to drive over to Morden and give us his unbiassed opinion?"

"I've no doubt of it, Foxley," said Melton Digby; "I can at least ask him. He can only refuse. If it is the genuine Raphael you suppose it to be, what do you think—roughly speaking, of course—it would be worth?"

"Certainly not less than ten thousand."

The Colonel had played a trump card. Granville Gudgeon saw his way to a scheme whereby to replenish his purse, and win that reputation for being a connoisseur for which he so much yearned, at one stroke.

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Since luncheon in Berkeley Square has no marked characteristics which raise it above or place it below the luncheons of other fashionable centres, let us not only suppose that, to the satisfaction of everyone, this meal is over, but further, that the drive to Morden is also an accomplished fact, and that Colonel Foxley, Melton Digby, Granville Gudgeon, and Rokeby are discussing

soda, brandy, and cigars in the bar parlour of the inn where the masterpiece lies *perdu*.

"Suppose we interview him," said Foxley, looking mysteriously round, as if he thought the landlord was listening at the keyhole.

"Suppose we do," said the others in chorus; and with this Boniface was summoned into the presence of the critics.

"You've a dirty old picture hanging up in the bar," Foxley began, "and one of my friends here says he likes the face—at least, what little of it there is left; I suppose you don't care to part with it, eh?"

"No, Sir," said the landlord, deliberately; "I don't, and that's flat. No; it may be a dirty old thing, as you say, but there's a gent as cleans of 'em up—at least, so I've 'eard say; besides, my grandmother give it to my father, and he gives of it to me, and he says—on his death-bed, he says—'Garge,' 'e says, 'never part with that yer pictur' unless you wants money badly, for there's a fortune in it any day.' Of course I can 'ave it took down, and you can see it in a good light if you cares to, and I can show you the stificate as I've got upstairs, as says it was painted by a man o' the name o' Ruffle—no, Raffle; yes, that was it—Raffle was the name."

The picture and certificate being duly produced, the landlord was about to expatiate still further on its merits when a new arrival called him to his post behind the bar, and left the connoisseurs untrammelled by his presence.

"What do you think of it?" said Foxley, drawing up the blind, shading his eyes with both hands, and going through those other courtesies which old masters seem to

expect from modern critics. "What do you think of it, gentlemen? Is it worth a visit, eh?"

"If I may venture to say so, not knowing much about Art," said Melton Digby, apologetically, "I think it's really a very clever——"

"What! Very clever, Melton—*clever*! Why, what the devil do you mean, man?" broke in Rokeby, excitedly seizing the picture, now holding it at arm's length and now bringing it with a smart jerk up to within an inch of his nose, or diving wildly into the right-hand corner as if the signature were about to display itself in a sudden outburst of luminous paint. "Clever—clever, my dear fellow! Clever's not the word. It's marvellous—perfectly marvellous; a genuine Raphael, an unmistakable Raphael—a perfect gem, I assure you—a perfect gem."

"Dear me," said Granville Gudgeon, "dear me, how odd—how very odd! Yes, yes, there can be no doubt whatever about it, Raphael alone could have rendered those shadows. That delicate texture, those tender half-tones, that power, that soul, the touching pathos of those eyes—all, all bespeak that mighty master hand."

"I congratulate you, I do, indeed," said Rokeby, "on the honest enthusiasm with which you express your love of all that is great and good in art. When, some years ago, I used to indulge my passion by purchasing, I should have ungrudgingly bid three or four thousand for that picture; and had I been able to secure it, I might have made a gigantic profit out of it. Heigh-ho! how unfortunate that I should have invested my little all in those petroleum wells—that bubble which, having burst, deprives me of a chance now which comes but once in a lifetime."

Foxley finally admitted that he never had been able to go beyond appreciation, a colonel's half-pay not admitting of such luxuries as old masters; while Digby—yes, Digby—most certainly would have strained every nerve to add so great a work to the family collection had he not lost heavily on the recent Derby, a matter which, till now, with wonderful fortitude he had kept to himself. Thus it was that Gudgeon had the field before him; he was in perfect ecstasies of delight, ready to sell out certain shares—do anything in fact—to secure so magnificent a masterpiece.

“By Jove!” said Foxley, who had been examining the picture through a powerful glass, “what’s this, Gudgeon—what’s this? R-a-p-h-a-e-”—spelling out each letter as he discovered it, “why it’s signed—actually signed, too—ah! and here’s the date: 1513.”

The landlord at this moment reappearing, a battle royal took place between him and Gudgeon, who felt truly grateful to his friends for the clever way in which, in that worthy’s presence, they depreciated the picture, and assured the old tippler that such a chance of selling might never come again.

This, however, appeared to have very little effect; he confessed that he didn’t know much, but what he did know was “That Raffle was a picture-painter whose things meant money, and, besides, he didn’t want for a few hundreds, and so was in no hurry to sell.”

The end of it was, however, that Gudgeon, to his great delight, struck a bargain—a magnificent bargain, as his friends assured him—by means of which, for twelve hundred pounds, this artistic jewel, in its original worm-eaten frame, became his property.

The same evening there was a select gathering at Colonel Foxley's rooms in Sackville Street, to which, by some unfortunate omission, Gudgeon had *not* been invited. Apart, however, from Colonel Foxley himself, known in London society to be possessed of all the virtues and none of the vices of his sex, there were, of course, present those inseparable cronies Melton Digby and Rokeby; and, indeed, yet another gentleman of our acquaintance, rotund of body, rubicund of visage, and horny of hand, whom we last met in a small suburban bar-parlour the then possessor of what he was pleased to term "a real Raffle"—no less a personage than Boniface himself.

"Well, Sprawle," said Foxley, addressing that individual with his blandest smile, "I can only say this, and I'm sure my friends here will bear me out, and that is, that you played your part admirably; you will see, too, that our word is as good as our bond—from *gentlemen* you have nothing to fear on that score. The cheque which you handed over to me before we left Morden was cashed just before Coutts closed, and I have now much pleasure in handing you over fifty guineas for your trouble; not bad pay, eh, Sprawle, for five minutes chat? Indeed, so satisfied are we with you as an actor and a man of business, that we propose very shortly putting several little matters in your way. In fact, I have now on hand two Murillos, a Paul Veronese, three Domenichinos, and a Leonardo da Vinci, which, with your assistance, may before long be *placed* with advantage to us all. In the meantime, let us hope Gudgeon may continue to gloat over his glorious acquisition.

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It is unnecessary to say that Messrs. Foxley and Co. were a long firm of polished swindlers who, with the aid of the *United States Army List*, *Burke's Peerage*, &c. &c., insinuated themselves into society, and with such sharp tools as Sprawle at command, emptied the pockets of the unwary with a *finesse* which it was marvellous to contemplate, besides which they retained the services of a special artist in Amsterdam, who on the shortest possible notice could produce, on worm-eaten panels, for a very small pittance, as many spurious Raphaels or mimic Michael Angelos as might be required.

The Colonel, naturally, having taken the lion's share, Digby and Rokeby divided the remainder, while Sprawle returned to the bosom of his family, there to await the arrival of another heirloom from his great-grandfather.

The foregoing is a case in point, in which I followed the trail of the serpent and watched its developments.

From my youth up I have had detective instincts, and cannot imagine (apart from that of a war artist) a profession which would have greater charms for me than that of an actual detective police officer. At one time it was quite a hobby with me to answer all those advertisements which profess, for a shilling's worth of postage stamps, to put the reader in possession of a means by which to make £10 a week; or others, which, for half that amount, promise £250 a year to be made by either sex with no greater expenditure of time than "a few spare hours weekly."

There are artistic shams, too, that have much interested me. The materials, to begin with, cost 10s.; but

what of this, if a fortune be promised—as it is? Paints to the value of about 2s. 6d. are at once forwarded, together with a picture, on the painting of which your fate is to depend.

It having been sent in, you in a day or so receive a most flattering letter to the effect that you promise wonderfully well, and that only a few more materials, say five shillings' worth, are required, and then, in all probability, you will be placed on their permanent staff. Always knowing the result in these matters, I have never indulged heavily for the sake of unravelling them; but have heard of many cases in which pounds have in this way been obtained, the actual end of the transaction generally being that "though full up at present, you are down for the first vacancy," which, of course, never comes. So innumerable are the devices by which these human spiders catch the all too-easily fascinated flies, that it would cost more time than I have to spare to lay their secrets bare; though if this were done, many a poor creature (old maiden ladies with limited means are easy victims) might be spared much of that pinching which is necessary to send off the amount always required by the advertiser before the secret of success is divulged. Now, it was at a time when full of interest in such matters, that I picked up and fitted together certain romantic incidents which surrounded the life of a seemingly most pious individual, who at that time resided not far from where I myself lived, and whose case may still be fresh in the memories of many.

I was much interested in Benjamin Barry. From the ends of his white cravat to the tips of his kid boots, he was a picture of perfect neatness and somewhat sanctified

sobriety. There were no local charities in connection with which his name as a donor (with several stars attached) was not to be found associated; he, moreover, established a soup-kitchen in an adjacent poor neighbourhood, and won golden opinions for the vigour with which he advocated all that was likely to contribute to the welfare of his fellow creatures; in short, Benjamin was generally allowed to be as good a specimen of humanity as could be found within several miles radius of Clapham Common, where, in a Queen Anne casket of cathedral glass and red brick (if we may term it so), this jewel of humanity reposed.

He was a churchwarden, and the pathetically pious, mutelike way in which he handed round the collection bag on Sunday was as much the admiration of the congregation as it was the envy of his colleagues. Nor was there on the surface any of that hypocrisy which sometimes characterizes the doings of our latter-day saints, for Benjamin Barry was not averse to mundane pleasures, and was always foremost in the joys, as he was sympathetic with the sorrows, of that flock in which he played the part of an assistant shepherd. Midsummer pic-nic and midwinter gathering were alike within the range of his broad views; and although he wore the blue ribbon conspicuously in his button-hole, choicest wines graced his social board for those of his friends who preferred them, when his wife gave "a small and early," or when "her own Benjie" asked a few picked parishioners to smoke a cigar with him in the study; they were, in fact, generosity personified.

It is on the occasion of one of Mrs. Barry's little gatherings that we have the pleasure of making this

gentleman's acquaintance. Our introduction will be brief, for he is apologizing, note in hand, to his guests, whom he will leave, he says, his wife to entertain while he rushes off, "only for half an hour," to minister to the wants of a poor woman, concerning whom he has just received an ill-spelt letter requiring his immediate attendance at her bedside, that she may consult him with reference to the future of her little ones. Specially is he apologizing to one—a foreign visitor—Count Correlli, who lately having taken a large house in Clapham Park is, pending the arrival of the Countess and family, living, *en garçon*, and is quite pleased to spend his evenings amongst his future neighbours.

"Entertain the Count, my dear, and our old friends here till I return; and let us sup, if possible, about 11.30, by which time I shall join you again," and then, turning to his distinguished guest,

"Count, I shall not sleep unless I accompany you on my violin before you leave, in that sonata to which you do such justice, and which you sang at the Vicarage last evening so admirably," and with this Benjamin Barry took his departure on the mission of mercy to which we have already referred.

Pending the Countess's arrival there were only two servants at "Oak Grange" (the house in Clapham Park which the Count had recently taken), and as he was consideration itself, he allowed his late hours by no means to interfere with their necessary rest. It was his habit to come in quietly with his latch-key, at such time as his social or diplomatic relations with the outer world would permit.

Now this fact, strangely enough, appeared to be

as well known to Mugglethorpe as to that distinguished nobleman or his servants, for, with the aid of a skeleton key, list slippers, a crape mask, and, in case of necessity, a jemmy and revolver, this gentleman of many aliases let himself in "quite unbeknown" to the mansion we have referred to, at 10.45 on this eventful evening. On "the light fantastic toe" Mugglethorpe proceeded forthwith to the Count's sanctum, prising open several drawers and boxes which seemed to promise plunder, till he lighted on a cash-box, the contents of which, with the dexterity of his craft, he proceeded to reveal: a few unpaid bills presented themselves. There was no money therein, and a look of disgust was just o'erspreading his be-craped features, when his eye lighted on a small parcel wrapped carefully in tissue paper, which he found in one of its inner compartments. The expression gave way to a triumphant smile as he examined its contents and carefully placed it in his waistcoat pocket, leaving as he did so "Oak Grange" to the custody of its sleepy guardians. Having removed the crape from his face, and lit a short pipe, he sauntered with the air of a tired mechanic in the direction of Clapham Junction, his tool-bag (in which he kept his jemmy and revolver) giving colour to the innocent part he played.

Let us follow him to a quiet cross-road on the common, and note his mode of procedure. The straw tool-bag is reversible; it is lined with leather, so that, being turned inside out, it becomes a very respectable black satchel. It contains two other useful articles besides those already named, a great coat of thin material, which rolls up into an exceedingly small space, and an opera hat. These are,

in less time than it takes to tell, put on, and Mugglethorpe proceeds on his way, in one sense at least a converted man.

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“My dear,” said Benjamin Barry, Esq., churchwarden and saint by special appointment to the parish of St. Christopher, “my dear,” said he, when their guests, having spent a delightful evening, had left, “it’s a perfect beauty, it is, indeed, and I only wish that circumstances would admit of my presenting it to you. Everything went admirably; the story of the poor woman would have thrown blood-hounds off the scent. The workmanship is exquisitely artistic, and the water of the stones unequalled”; and with this, from a silver paper wrapper, he produced a diamond necklet which perfectly dazzled his loving helpmate as she examined it with the scrutiny of an expert.

“Lovely, dear, lovely!”

“I will take it to Porckleton to-morrow, who will have the gold melted down within an hour of my arrival, and the diamonds re-set in a week.”

“I think, do you know, dear,” said his spouse, “I should keep quiet for a month or so, now, for the ’tecs are on the alert, and these mysterious burglaries at Clapham are getting talked about. It would be as well to let the complaint break out somewhere else, and let our own neighbourhood rest a while.”

“Well, perhaps so, dear, perhaps so; there are a good many pros and cons in the matter, but I generally find you’re right in the long run”; and thus the two went on chatting till the candles on the piano burning low reminded them it was high time to go to bed, which they forthwith proceeded to do.

Now it is a very remarkable fact that the robbery at "Oak Grange" never got wind, the police were not communicated with, nor was any reference to the circumstance made even by the Count himself, who, on many subsequent occasions, presented himself at "The Shrubby," (the name in which the home of the Barrys rejoiced) and enjoyed himself as heretofore.

"He must be a man of immense wealth, to treat such a matter with so little concern," said that gentleman to himself; "for the disordered condition in which the room was left prevents the possibility of his not having discovered the—well, the—the—appropriation."

Be that, however, as it may, the Count was suavity itself, and all appeared to go well at both establishments, Benjamin Barry holding his head higher than ever in the circle in which he mixed, and the Count being more courted and admired every hour of his life, his wife being already spoken of as "the dear Countess" whom they were all dying to shake by the hand and welcome to the select seclusion of Clapham Park.

Let us, reader, now draw in our reins, and follow the fortunes of that diamond necklet, which as it were, forms, the pivot on which our tale turns.

It has, since we saw it in the drawing-room at "The Shrubby," been strangely metamorphosed. It is now not only two bracelets set in handsomely-chased gold, but a cross—there is irony in this—a cross, to serve either as a brooch or pendant. The set are in a plush-lined box, displayed as a central *pièce de resistance* in a certain courteous jeweller's shop not a thousand miles from Westbourne Grove. Many are the passers by who stand and stare with longing eyes

at this cluster of gems, and who pass on, sighing to think that while some men are possessed of such unbounded wealth as to be able, without any noticeable difference in their banking accounts, to purchase such treasures, they must ever creep through life in a state of semi-starvation ; others, again, have a gleam of hope that if a rich uncle dies, or the stocks go up, they might, perhaps, purchase it to soften a wife's heart, or minister to a sweetheart's vanity.

To make a long story short, however, amongst others who passed that shop was one Baron de Veaux, a French banker, who had come over here recently to negotiate a Government loan, whose daughter, as he told the jeweller while admiring the brilliants, which were now being displayed for his inspection, was about to be married and to whom he wished to make an appropriate present.

"Two thousand five hundred pounds is absolutely your lowest price," said he, in broken English, which it will be unnecessary to imitate ; "your very lowest ? Well—it's a large sum, a very large sum, but still, I'm much fascinated by their lustre and workmanship. I—I—I will have them. Bring them as they are to my hotel at 2.30 to-morrow, and I will give you the money." With this the Baron, having left his card, was politely shown out by the beaming jeweller, who saw in his commission alone a considerable pile in prospective.

"Won't old Ben be delighted !" said he, as he returned to the shop-parlour and poured out a glass of tawny old port on the strength of it. "Two thousand five hundred at a stroke ! That's what I call business indeed," said he, smacking his lips after the second glass.

And old Ben was delighted. Directly after closing hour our friend the jeweller jumped into a hansom, and hurried off to acquaint his accomplice of the sale he had effected ; and now more tawny port was discussed, notwithstanding the blue ribbon that fluttered at Benjamin's button-hole, a proceeding at which Mrs. Ben assisted, as she always did in all things, having been his loving helpmate now for nearly thirty years.

True, she was not, as they say, "as young as she used to be"; but although those golden tresses which had won his young heart thirty-two years ago, when she was dispensing stout and smiles across the counter of "The Blue Boar," have turned to silver, yet, "that sweet smile haunts him still." She has lost few of the old charms and none of the cunning of her youth; each and all she now displays with such infinite skill whenever little "at homes" to a select few require her attention, or her friends want patting on the back.

"You were born to command, Porckleton—born to command. With your insight into character, your diplomatic aptitude, your quick perception, you might have been as great a general as you are a jeweller. Don't forget local charities and Sunday school treats, Porckleton; they cover a multitude of sins, I assure you. We are exactly what we make ourselves, Porckleton, in our own neighbourhood, and that which applies to Clapham Common does so equally in connection with—ahem, at the West End." Another cigar discussed, more tawny port having been sipped, and the amount of commission having been definitely arranged, our friend the jeweller now took his

departure, congratulating himself on the happy chance which led the Baron past his shop window.

The following day he was at the hotel with commendable promptitude, the plush-lined jewel-case, wrapped in brown paper to avoid suspicion of its contents, placed carefully in the breast pocket of his great coat. He sent up his business card, and was soon ushered into an elegant apartment, in which, at a table, with champagne, cigars, and other luxuries before them, sat the Baron and, as he explained, his daughter's *fiancée*, an elegant young foreigner, whose politeness quite overwhelmed the jeweller as he took his seat on the extreme edge of the chair which the distinguished foreigner placed for him, with the air of a man who found himself in an atmosphere too rarified for his unaccustomed lungs. The Baron at once opened the conversation.

"You have the diamonds with you?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Good. I have negotiated the amount, as I promised; you would, I suppose, prefer notes or gold, or both, to a cheque?"

"Yes, Sir; notes and gold."

"Good. Show my future son-in-law the gems, while I fetch my cash-box," and with this the Baron rose and walked across the room, while Porckleton produced the jewel-case and displayed the brilliants in all their glory.

The next moment he was on the hearthrug under the influence of chloroform, quite insensible, and the jewel-case in the breast-pocket of the Baron's frock-coat. A huge box which the Baron had brought with him to the hotel was now opened, from which a number of bricks were

taken which had been used to convey an idea of weighty and important contents; these were consigned to a cupboard in the adjoining bedroom, while in their place was carefully coiled up that discomfited, be-chloroformed jeweller. Then, strolling leisurely downstairs, the Baron and his young friend ordered dinner (they had been good customers for at least a week), with a tempting *menu*, to be served in their rooms at 6.30; a fly to be ready to take them to the opera (*Trovatore*) at 7.45. They then lit their havanahs, and walked down Piccadilly till they came to the first cab stand, driving direct to Charing Cross, where they changed for the Underground to Victoria, varying the route by taking another cab to the City and the omnibus to Clapham Park, when the Baron asked his young friend to make "Oak Grange" his home. In short, two English scoundrels had cleverly arranged this matter between them. A considerable amount of *finesse* and a certain amount of address being, after all, all that was necessary in either case.

Of course, my readers have already seen that the sham Count and counterfeit Baron were one and the same man; to the same extent, in fact, that Mugglethorpe and Benjamin Barry, Esquire, were identical, the curious point of the affair being that the diamonds stolen by the latter from the so-called Count were (when reset) recovered unwittingly from the jeweller by their former owner; and the fact that they had been stolen by him in the first place was the reason why no hue and cry was raised for their recovery when they were lost. Diamond had cut diamond without knowing it, and the experts of Clapham were so far quits.

Now when the waiters that evening laid the cloth in the Baron's sitting-room a curious smell still pervaded it, besides which a sepulchral voice proceeded from the huge box, which caused those two white-chokered minions to beat a hasty retreat and give information to the hotel proprietor that there was one more man in the house than they bargained for.

The result was that the police were sent for, and the victim's clothes examined, in which a jewel-case containing exquisite imitations of the bracelets and pendant were found. The cautious tradesman, having had facsimiles of the genuine articles so carefully executed as to almost defy an expert, had arranged in his own mind to give the spurious articles at the last moment in exchange for the notes and gold, with which he would at once leave London, severing his connection with old Ben, and disposing of the actual diamonds in some foreign capital where inquiries were less likely to be made.

The Fates, however, had willed it otherwise; and the police were able to supply the missing link which made this strange chain of events complete. Briefly told, the story runs thus:—

Sister Thérèse, a beautiful woman, and lady superior of the Convent of St. Ursula, near Moscow, obliged all those who took the vows—as an earnest of giving up the follies and vanities of the world, the flesh and the Devil—to cut off their hair, placing their tresses in a specially-prepared box on which a red cross was painted, which with their own hands they buried deep down in the convent garden. Many flocked to the pious standard of the beautiful Thérèse, who also accepted any contributions

“for the good of the Church,” of jewellery or other convertible evidences of human weakness which neophytes might tender.

Amongst these was a certain diamond necklet, given by the misguided daughter of an English lady of great wealth, who, owing to an interrupted love affair had rushed from home disconsolate, been won over by one of Therése’s emissaries and conveyed to the Convent of St. Ursula, where, with many others, she proceeded to bury her sorrows and her locks.

Now, it may appear strange on the face of it, but had that burial-ground of human vanity been dug up by profane hands, not one single hair, black, auburn, or blonde, would have been forthcoming to tell how such beauty had been sacrificed at the shrine of faith. No, not one; for no sooner were these, in many cases, lovely tresses placed underground than they were that same night unearthed and sent carefully packed to Vienna or Paris, where, in some cases, they sold for a considerable sum, no questions ever being asked of the pious Therése.

This cluster of diamonds, however, was altogether too much for the Lady Superior. She had a rough idea of their immense value; and so, under pretext of coming to England to obtain converts to her religious sect, she started for London, where, having admirable introductions, she soon found herself in “society,” a much-admired lady philanthropist who held the broadest views for the general good, and who was much interested in, though not absolutely connected with, a certain Russian sisterhood of which we have already heard.

Thus she was able to doff the sombre garb of the nun

for fashionable attire, in which she was much helped by the happy accident that at that particular time (some few years since) it was the English custom to cut the hair short, hence the clipped condition of her own head was not remarkable, save as a concession to fashion. Alas! all is vanity. That diamond necklace, worn only once, was not unnoticed or unadmired, its marvellous brilliancy attracting the attention of a certain Count, who, availing himself of the non-arrival of her carriage, placed his brougham at her disposal. The rest is soon told.

Chloroform having done its work, the necklace is secured, and the lady driven to her apartments in Sloane Street, where her maid receives her in a half conscious condition, the Count driving thence by a circuitous route to Clapham Park.

Therése could no more raise a hue-and-cry about the necklace she had herself appropriated than the Count could when Barry, *alias* Mugglethorpe, stole it from him; neither thinking it wise, under the circumstances, to complain about the hardness of fate. The arrest of Porckleton the jeweller now put a new aspect on affairs; he had everything to lose and nothing to gain, save the chance of lightening his sentence by turning Queen's evidence. This he proceeded with all possible speed to do.

Through his instrumentality Mugglethorpe and Benjamin Barry were proclaimed one and the same man, while the Count, *alias* the Baron, also found himself at the Central Criminal Court on many *counts* more substantial than the fictitious title which he bore; while, as for Therése, inquiries are still being made for her, she having so far failed to return to the convent of St. Ursula. The

resetting of the gems being only a temporary drawback to their identification. The wealthy mother of that ill-advised daughter who joined the Holy Sisterhood at last regained not only her lost child but those brilliants, which, through a series of strange adventures, exemplified more than once the adage of "diamond cut diamond."

The events I have just recorded spring from absolute facts, which were unravelled at the time by the police at Scotland Yard and at Moscow. Distinct in themselves, they required the smallest threads by means of which to associate one with the other, acquiring by continuity greater interest, and serving as a warning generally against those subtle and dangerous enemies to society who, with refined surroundings, go so long unsuspected, especially when their real intentions are hidden by the well-worn cloak of sanctity, as in the case of the suave villain, Benjamin Barry, Esquire.

As to the other social shadows who flit across our paths from time to time their name is legion, and here I have only opportunity to refer in passing to one or two exceptional cases.

Having, by the way, amongst other experiences had two personal encounters with burglars and one with a would-be footpad, I take it that I may advisedly refer to them here.

Taking them in order, I may first speak of the time when (I think I must have been about twenty-two) I was lodging in Bywater Street, Chelsea. My landlady, a dear old creature of the corkscrew-curl and gold-rimmed spectacle persuasion, had one daughter, who, as she put it,

“did” for me; she, who was “her only joy—though it should never be said of her, as a mother, you understand, that she would for one moment stand in the dear girl’s light, whose father — sainted soul — had been chief booking-clerk on the Great Northern Railway, when, all along o’ that draughty office, he was took off sudden.”

Thus would this garrulous old creature strive, on those occasions when she brought up my tea or supper, to improve the shining hour with a view to the ultimate

settlement of Louisa, and, moreover, being of a nervous temperament, would often wake in the silent hours of the night, having aroused Louisa aforesaid from her dreams, declaring “she had heard a curious sort of scrappy noise, just for all the world like someone filing,” and would set up with that fair offspring of hers a series of



yells, enough, as the neighbours often said, “to bring the house down.”

On such occasions I was of course at once requisitioned to go over the house, from garret to cellar, even to explore the second-floor back, where the one servant of which that establishment boasted would assure me, as she stood trembling on the landing, “that there were at least two of ’em somewheres in the house.” Thus I was subjected for many months to periodical attacks of alarm, till one night, in reply to the accustomed voice

calling "There are thieves in the house," I was almost electrified by her this time adding, "I know there are."

It was even so; lying awake, suffering, if memory serves me, from sausages on the chest, I myself distinctly heard the area door open, noting at the same time the light fantastic tread of one bent on plunder; I heard him next give his attention to my sitting-room door, which was on the ground floor, and on listening more attentively heard him pottering about in quest of what he might find that was sufficiently portable and valuable for him to carry away, and so make the game worth the candle.

It would have been an instructive sight to those destined in life to struggle often with burglars, to have noted the way in which your humble servant, frightened out of his seven senses in very truth, nevertheless assumed a defiant strut, to which his fluttering heart was far from responding, as he prepared to meet the foe.

Well do I remember the laced boots which at that time I used to wear, and how careful I was to lace them for that special attack, and, moreover, how noisily I proceeded down the stairs which led to that sitting-room in which my landlady's household gods were many and my own few. The nearer I got the more measured was my tread, as, with a candlestick in one hand and the tongs in the other, I approached my sanctum.

I was just stepping from the last stair when the door suddenly opened, and I was confronted by a gentleman, of whom the accompanying sketch may give a better idea than any description of mine.

One glance was enough. There must have been a devil

in my eye which I did not know was lurking there ; I did not inquire into his impressions. Whether the tremulous way in which I clutched those tongs suggested to that midnight intruder any desire to grapple with him—which, I assure you, I was far from feeling—I do not know, but the next instant he made one lurch, and was beating a hurried retreat down the kitchen stairs in the direction of the area by which he had entered. I was a hero now ; the enemy was in full retreat. It is so easy to follow a well started

lead—at least, so it seemed to me as I turned the corner of those kitchen stairs.



Alas ! how little do we know what fate has in store for us ; the next instant I was flying headlong to the bottom of that flight, tripped up by a loaf dexterously placed behind him on the first step

by that wily burglar, who, having pocketed what very few things of any value he could find, jumped like a harlequin over the banisters, and was soon lost to sight in a maze of back streets. I shall ever feel grateful to him for his kindly, not to say precipitate flight, and cordially forgive him that little *contretemps* with reference to the half-quartern loaf.

For the benefit of the unwary, it may be wise to say that a carefully rolled-up door-mat placed half-way up the stairs, is the never-failing barrier which the burglar places

between himself and the heroic householder. How simple are these truly great inventions!

Years afterwards, on yet another occasion, I was aroused in the small hours—this time by my little one, a child of eight, with “Dada, there’s someone in the garden.”

I at first supposed she had been dreaming, but on looking out of window, not only discovered that there was someone there, but was soon in close converse with him. It was a policeman, who in a hoarse whisper said, “Bugglers, Sir, getting into big house over there; I’m sent to circumvent ’em. I don’t mind bugglers—they’re in my line—but I can’t stand daugs, and yours is a rasper.”

I should say that Plevna, my faithful house-dog, had kept up a barking accompaniment to the policeman’s explanation. The result was that I came down and pacified him while the policeman cleared the party wall which divided my cottage from the grounds of a neighbouring house; nay, more, having wrapped myself up in a warm pilot, and slipped a revolver into my pocket, in case I wanted to intimidate, I fell in with the spirit of the thing to such an extent that I became one of the hunting party.

While the police were in quest of him in the next garden, the chief actor in this little domestic drama had remained *perdu* in my shrubbery, eventually making tracks across our small domain, when he was soon lost to sight. A few moments afterwards we unearthed two more of these interesting individuals, who at once separated, bolting in opposite directions, so as to divide our forces, which they succeeded in doing.

Then came a stiff run, in which I soon out-distanced the over-clad policeman who was following in the chase, and was not long in finding myself within measurable distance of our fugitive, when a circumstance came about which I had in no way anticipated.

The braces which I had tied hastily round my waist, to support my trousers, suddenly gave way—but no ; let us draw a veil over the impending catastrophe which brought me to a sudden and unexpected standstill at that critical moment, and which gave that retreating figure yet another chance of freedom.

Matters rearranged, I was soon again in hot pursuit, and once more rapidly gaining on my adversary, when I suddenly bethought me of my revolver. I was passing a lamp-post when I drew it, shouting as I did so, “Down, or I’ll fire !” He turned, and realising that I had something glittering in my hand, instantly obeyed the unanswerable argument of the six-shooter, and collapsed.

The next moment he was assured beyond doubt of the nature of the weapon, the muzzle of which, as he lay prone on the pavement, I drew across his face, asking him persuasively if he would care to become yet better acquainted with its peculiarities.

The policeman having by this time joined me, we marched him off to the police-station, when we met the sergeant and constable converging with yet another miscreant on the same spot.

So much for burglars, as far as my small experience goes ; but I mustn’t forget the footpad of Coldharbour Lane, Brixton—physically, a very different character.

It happened that about 10 o’clock one night, being at

the farthest end of Coldharbour Lane from the Brixton Road, I stopped to inquire my way of a small, mouse-like, consumptive-looking individual, who, in a poor little weak voice, replied that as he was himself going in that same direction, he would show me.

To those who are unacquainted with Coldharbour Lane, I would say—it is a spot where they would hesitate to “meet me by moonlight alone,” or anyone else, unless perfectly assured of the lamblike nature of him who proposed such a place of rendezvous. In this case my companion was beyond reproach, as far as external appearances were concerned, and thus my astonishment may be better imagined than described when that diminutive individual, after a preliminary cough or two, turned and assumed, to the best of his small ability, the rôle of a bloodthirsty footpad. Rushing a few steps in advance of me, he turned, and in a voice husky with nervousness, said—

“Gi’ me yer money, or I’ll settle yer!”

Be it remembered he had no weapons with which to argue the settlement in question, but seeing he was as much in earnest as such a poor pinched-up pigmy could be, I called him several names which were more powerful than polite, and then finding he was still defiant, sent



that already half-starved little highwayman flying against a neighbouring wall, at the foot of which he collapsed, and proceeded to howl pathetically. Thus it was that, after I asked him if he was really quite sure he could not rob me, I listened to his sad story, which he then and there proceeded to tell.

“’Tis n’t,” he said, “as if it was the fust time to-night, Sir; that’s where it is—it’s the third. The fust gentleman, as was a-comin’ from his club the wus for whisky—’e rolls on me, the second kicks me, an’ now you ’its me up agin this ’ere wall. It’s no good—I won’t try agin; I ain’t made for it, that’s the long an’ the short of it.”

This was told in the most melancholy strain; and the little man was right indeed in the last conclusion.

“But there are surely many honest things you might do,” I interrupted.

“That’s where it is, Sir. You see, I tried ’em all, leastways what I thought I could do. I ain’t big enough for some guvnors, and too little for others, and so that’s ’ow I’ve come down and down from one thing to another, till yesterday, when I’d only twopence in my pocket and not a bit of food in me inside since the day afore that, when I went and took it—the twopence, I mean—and spent the lot on matches. They gives yer twelve for twopence at the large shops, yer know, Sir. Well, if you’ll believe me, I begged that ’ard with them there blessed matches all day long, and never sold one on ’em. I slep’ out on the Embankment larst night, and begun again early this mornin’, getting ’arf famished as the day went on. Yer see, Sir, it must be that I ain’t got the knack o’ the professional beggar, or somethin’, for here’s all

them twelve boxes in my pocket at this moment, just as I bought 'em the day afore yesterday. No, it ain't no lies, it's the honest truth; for 'ere they be, as yer can see for yerself. From the knocking about I've 'ad, it's a mercy as they ain't all gone off. Well, at 8 o'clock to-night I give up honesty as a bad job, and took to the road; and 'ere I am agin this 'ere wall, an' no further on the way to getting a crust than afore."

Suffice it to say, after asking him if he was quite certain he could not take it by force, I gave him a shilling; and when we eventually arrived together in the Brixton Road, I bade adieu and *bon voyage* to my friend the footpad, a creature who would not have had the ghost of a chance with the most nervous traveller or most intoxicated reveller.

Ah, yes; ghost of a chance—just so! That reminds me that I have not, in reference to my Chelsea studio, exhausted altogether my ghostly experiences. I have, of course, several times in my life stayed at so-called haunted houses, and once or twice slept in rooms with an uncanny reputation; indeed, who has not. But the incident I would now introduce concerns certain curious manifestations which took place when I lived at Number One.

Yes, Number One; that will be quite sufficient for my present purpose, without giving the address in full, in which case intending purchasers might be prejudiced; or the present residents there, if it be let, have fears aroused which are now groundless.

About twelve years ago I took this house on advantageous terms, as far as rent went, though a seven years' repairing

lease was a *sine qua non*. Suffice it to say it was in a London suburb, and was just such a place an artist with an eye to quaint picturesqueness would be likely to look on with favour, and few others would care to seriously consider.

Oh, yes; there was plenty for the money at Number One; indeed, more—much more—than was included in the lease. The rooms were large and effectively decorated, and lent themselves in a peculiar way, as some rooms do, to the display of artistic taste. The “hall,” unlike the narrow passage which generally enjoys that distinction, was square and commodious; the stairs leading to the rooms on the first floor were broad and pleasant of ascent, while those which took one still further aloft, to a suite of rooms which—useless to me as a bachelor—I left in possession of the spiders, were narrow and creaky. At eventide in summer the fitful shadows from neighbouring trees, combined with those of a grape vine of very ancient growth, fell athwart the tall French windows and played hide-and-seek on the carpets of the ground floor, or danced on the low verandah which communicated by steps with the garden. Such was Number One, when I, for a term of seven years, took possession of it.

I had two servants, a man and his wife; the garden requiring the former’s attention. From time to time I had one and sometimes two bachelor friends staying with me; but still, notwithstanding this, there was a certain gloominess which pervaded the whole place, and which so far communicated itself to the servants that “they couldn’t abide it,” the man declaring he felt “creepy” and his young spouse seeing “carrupses,” as she called them,

whichever way she looked. Indeed, she was once in hysterics the greater part of the night. Thus it was I began to repent somewhat of my bargain, especially since, from time to time, my bachelor visitors assured me that the alarm of my two domestics was not altogether unfounded, as they, too, had heard unaccountable noises. In fact, unwilling as I was to admit it even to myself, I also on several occasions was aroused by sounds as of the moving of furniture from place to place, with now and then a heavy thud as of the falling of some weighty substance. Still, with all its uncanny peculiarities, the old place had a peculiar charm for me ; so that when, shortly afterwards, I lost my heart, and found myself engaged to be married, I cast all such uncanny ideas at once to the winds.

Indeed, I had looked on them in some sense as absurd from the first, and so with a liberal application of fresh paint and whitewash, together with new servants, we cheerfully returned from our honeymoon. I here should incidentally mention, that a mutual friend, a gentleman, came shortly after our return to spend some weeks with us.

Time elapsed, and nothing whatever happening, I came to the conclusion that it must have been the loneliness of my previous state which had induced my belief in the assertions of my bachelor friends, and that the fears of the servants had, as I supposed, been brought about by penny dreadfuls. With these wholesome reflections the third week had nearly passed, when one night—our friend having gone to a dinner-party and taken with him (as he was not expected home till late) the latch-key—we retired early. It must have been about the witching hour, when I was

aroused by my wife, who, nudging me, said, in a low whisper,

“ Did you hear anything? That can’t be Charlie; he’s not come in yet. Besides, it’s such an odd noise, like someone banging things about.”

We both listened intently, my memories of similar sounds now rebuking me for having kept the secret from



my wife, and not having led up in some way to the possibility of their recurrence. We had not to wait long, for the next moment—rumble!—tumble!—crash!—bang! I was out of bed in no time; partially dressed, I seized a candlestick in one hand and in the other an old-fashioned pistol, which formed part of a little trophy of arms that hung in my bedroom, and was on my way to the empty

rooms above, from which direction the sound proceeded. Dead silence now pervaded the whole house ; the sensation that I was being peered at by unseen eyes only being, I conclude, induced by nervousness.

Presently, however, while continuing my investigations—crash!—rumble!—tumble!—this time the sound proceeded from the first floor, which I had just left. Flying downstairs again, I ricocheted against my wife, who, having heard the same sound upstairs, was on the point of rushing up to me, each at the same moment asking,

“Did you hear that? Have you seen anything?”

We then proceeded on a tour of inspection, which brought us eventually to the hall, when, already in a state of nervous excitement, we were attracted by a rattling sound. It was nothing more formidable, however, than the latch-key. The friend who was staying with us had returned, and his surprise on entering, at the queer domestic group which met his gaze, was not to be wondered at.

“In the name of patience, what’s the matter?”

Explanations only increased his incredulity. Being, however, fully dressed, he offered to search the garden, which he did without result. Returning presently to the hall, he began assuring us that it *must* have been imagination, when—at that moment—the sound we had already heard came upon us from somewhere with redoubled force. He thought it was down; I thought it was upstairs. Down he rushed; up I went, closely followed by my wife, till we eventually met outside my friend’s bedroom door, with no better fortune than before.

“By Jove! there was no mistake about it that time,” he said. “However, as there is no explaining it, we may as

well turn in," and this, with promises to turn out at a moment's notice if necessary, we proceeded to do.

Matters went on quietly for some weeks when the same thing occurred again with as little result, save that on that occasion, when we had given up our explorations and returned to our rooms, we were disturbed by loud shrieks from a servant whose sleeping apartment was on the ground floor, whom we had so far kept in ignorance of those unnatural nocturnal disturbances.

"Murder—murder! Mr. Montagu!"

I spent no time on my toilet that time, but rushed down just as I was. I found the poor girl in an almost fainting condition, gasping between each breath,

"There's someone there—there!" pointing as she spoke to a room adjoining her own.

I called for help and water. The next moment my friend, also aroused by her screams, and equally *en déshabille*, joined me. He at once made for the kitchen, and not knowing the ways of the house, and seeing no bowl or glass at hand, seized a saucepan and filled it with water.

My wife, feeling her presence might be needed, next appeared, and her description of us both, in the airiest of costumes—one supporting a semi-insensible girl in his arms, and the other, in a pair of white pants, holding a huge saucepan in one hand while he profusely doused her with water with the other—was a scene not easily to be forgotten.

Suffice it to say the room in question was searched, but nothing discovered which could throw any light on the mystery. I determined, however, to leave the house,

come what would, and was not a little astonished to find the landlord as amiable as he was in connection with that seven years' repairing lease. This, however, was explained by a conversation I one day had with a neighbouring tradesman, who with a grim smile said :

"Ah, Sir, you've stopped longer than most of them; we generally give 'em six months, but you've beaten the record. Fact is the place is 'aunted, and there's an end of it. No one knows it better than the landlord himself. There have been those who have said they've seen things. A white lady is supposed to walk, and you've no doubt noticed the bloodstains in the first-floor back room." (There certainly were marks on the boards of that room, which to this day I am inclined to think were paint). "Well, Sir," he went on, "though some, as I've said, are supposed to have seen things, as a rule it's only noises; and they tell me that they are sometimes awful."

I have only to say that others occupied the place after I left, that no one remained long, and that up to the present time no light that I am aware of has ever been thrown on the mystery of Number One.

* * * *

That in my varied career I have played several parts, will be, I think, evident to those who have gone with me thus far, but I was only once myself mistaken for a spectre; and this brings my experiences amongst wandering tribes next into consideration, it having been my lot at one time, in connection with the press, to see much of them, apart from which I have employed them over and over again as models, and after the sittings

were over, have had long chats with them concerning their unique lives.

My first acquaintance with a gipsy pitch in England was a short distance from London, when I plunged at once into conversation with a swarthy, buxom star-diviner who was sitting in the main street of the camp, binding up bundles of clothes-pegs ready for market.

"Well, Sir," she said, "I dun' 'no so much about that," in reply to my queries as to making a few notes of gipsy life; "I suppose it's all right what you say, and you ain't a spectre."

I hastened to assure her I was not.

"I mean," she went on, "a spectre o' nuisances or anything o' that kind; for a poor gipsy now-a-days finds it 'ard to get a pitch anywhere, leastways compared with when I was a girl. Notting Hill and Notting Dale, Mitcham Common, Wormwood Scrubbs, Willesden, and 'Ampstead was all open to us in those days, but the spectres drives us farther and farther away every year now. But you come along o' me, Sir, and I'll see what I can do for yer;" and with this, Rachel (for this I found to be her name) led me to what turned out to be the Royal kraal, where a grizzly old man and three children were seated, these also busily engaged in peg-making and peg-binding.

"He's the King, he is; that is, he would be if there were kings now-a-days; leastways his wife Sarah was one o' the last o' the gipsy queens—warn't she, Joe?" said my guide to his majesty. "And them two there is the two princesses, Sarah and Ada; and the little 'un, young Phil, he's a prince."

Now, as the Princess Ada seemed to be the leading spirit on the female side of royal descent, I dubbed her on the spot Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which I proceeded to contribute the munificent sum of 7½d., the amount in coppers which came most conveniently to hand, and it is astonishing how, from that moment, our acquaintance ripened into friendship.

"Ah, Sir," said the old man, "*you* are a Romany Rye" (gipsy gentleman) "*you* are; and you tell 'em on the pitch as Joe Stanley sent yer, and they'll give yer a welcome all round.

"Ah!" he went on, meditatively (the mention by Rachel of his queen having touched the chords of memory), "ah! but she was a pretty creature, she was, was my old 'oman. Begging yer pardon, Sir, I mean Queen Sarah, as they used to call her one time round about the Black Country. Ada ain't unlike her sometimes, specially when she happens to be doing a bit o' star business, or ruling a planet for a pigeon" (one easily plucked).

On inquiring still further into their belief in divination, I found it impossible to make them admit it to be an imposture, though they conceded that, all things considered, fortunes did come very much alike.

"Yer see, Sir, if a young 'oman don't know a dark man, she's sure to be sweet on a fair 'un, so we 'aves 'er both ways, and if we tell 'er she'll receive a letter shortly why she most likely will, so that's 'ow it 'appens as things is, as they is, so to speak. And then as to rulin' o' planets, why—the more we gets the more we tells 'em, and if *that* ain't fair, I don't know what is."

Having worried the subject of fortune-telling long.

enough, I led by easy stages to their own tribal superstitions, and found their belief in ghosts and goblins, banshees, &c., was as deep-rooted as it was peculiar; for instance, they believe in everyone having several good spirits in constant attendance on them, beautiful to look upon while they keep in the paths of virtue, but becoming proportionately hideous as they indulge in vice. Thus, the "spirit of drunkenness" was really a "spirit of moderation," becoming more and more appalling as the evil habit took possession of those over whom it was guardian, till it should so horrify them that at last they must relinquish the immoderate use of the bottle, whereupon the spirit would immediately resume its original beauty. Snakes and black cats are also supposed to be bewitched by evil spirits; snails, rooks, and bees being, on the other hand, in high favour, and their characters identical. The snail carries his home on his back; the rook is black as the oblivion from which it comes, and the bee tells the flowers their fortunes, while with true gipsy cunning it sucks from them all the sweets which they possess.

With regard to theft, they consider themselves a sadly misunderstood people. In one tent, during my stay with them, I saw many more copper kettles, copper coal-scuttles, copper saucepans, &c. than seemed necessary to family use, and perhaps my having cast a scrutinizing eye on these led to the good wife's volunteering her views on the subject.

"Steal!" she said. "Ah! that's how it is: 'give a dog a bad name, and hang him.' Why, bless your brown eyes, Sir, *we* never steals; it's all along o' intermarriage. When our people intermarry with *gorgios* (outsiders who are

not of gipsy blood), things always go wrong; *they* steals, and we gets the credit o' it."

Here, there, and everywhere in Europe and Asia have I foregathered with the gipsies; their physiognomy, habits and language being so much the same that one's experiences with one tribe may be looked on as representing the community, be they the Gitanos of Spain, the Zingari of Italy, the Bohemians of France, or any other varieties of the Romany brotherhood to be found elsewhere. Some survival of the old Eastern custom of partaking of bread and salt with the newly-arrived guest may be found in the cordial welcome extended to those whose visit their camps: "Mandes tachene Rye" (Here's a health to the great gentleman) being the salutation to which one has to respond by draining a cup on entering a Romany tent, be the potation tea or malt, or—on great occasions—something stronger.

I have also found that gipsies, as a body, though they are not actually Atheists, have no very deep-rooted faith, save those "Christian" gipsies who stand out conspicuously from their fellows, and who are so-called in contradistinction to the race generally.

In work they are most energetic, their chief trades being the making of clothes-props, pegs, skewers, and baskets, together with chair-mending and hawking generally.

The Christian names, if one may so call them, of gipsies are, amongst the men, chiefly Eastern, and what are better understood by us as Scriptural, while those of the women, such as Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Honesty, &c., are taken as a rule from the virtues which, let us hope, they inherit not only in name.

Their fondness for pets is as remarkable as the names they give them; thus, in one camp I found a favourite *gri* (horse) which was called after the murderer Peace; again, a donkey enjoyed the name of Lefroy—the names of malefactors of all kinds applying to an almost inexhaustible range of domestic favourites.

Although, as I have said, they labour hard during many hours of the day to earn the average sum of about 3s., they do not by any means forget that “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”; for when they have freshened themselves up at night in their grimy cabins (which are, as a rule, about 14 feet by 10 feet, and sometimes accommodate a large family), they emerge, and often, to the lively strains of the fiddle, concertina, or flute, dance and otherwise enjoy themselves, till late on into the night, especially at fair time, when they are in their glory.

My presence at the death-bed of one of their number (a lovely little child) enables me to testify to their affectionate devotion to each other when sympathy is most needed. The emblem of death with them is a sod of grass, this they put into a saucer of water and place upon the breast of the deceased, a ceremony about the observance of which they are most particular.

With a view to bringing my experiences as closely up to date as possible, I may say that only a few weeks since, when lecturing in Scotland, I heard of a Romany settlement up at Kirk Yetholm, in the Cheviots, which village has always had the reputation of being the capital of the Scotch gipsies. Of late years, I find they have to a great extent dispersed, having gone to live elsewhere, owing to intermarriage with the outside world. However, I had

the good fortune to meet Her Majesty the Queen in the village, who carried her seventy-five summers lightly enough, and was volubility itself in connection with her royal descent—in fact, she rather astonished me at first by assuring me that King David had been her brother-in-law. I am not prone to doubt, but I felt that that gipsy family-tree must be rotten somewhere at the roots. She, however, was, I found on further inquiry, perfectly right, the king she claimed relationship to being David Foa Bligh, whose wife, Esther, succeeded him, and for many years enjoyed a most peaceable and prosperous reign.

On her death, in the common order of things, Prince Richard, her son, should have come into power, but the gipsies, one and all, refused to be represented by one whose princely life had been spent, to a great extent, in prison, and who had won a more general reputation for petty peccadilloes than princely qualities. I was unfortunate in not being able to interview this Prince Richard, since he was engaged, I understood at the time of my



QUEEN HELEN.

visit, on urgent private affairs somewhere farther up country.

She who now represented the throne, the sister-in-law of King David, and whose name in full was Helen Foa Bligh, was, she assured me, the reigning Queen of the Gipsies. She informed me she preferred living in the old palace—of which I introduce a sketch with the royal mews attached (where she kept her donkey)—to the new palace not far off, where her sister Esther died, but as it was a most unpicturesque cottage, I made no note of it.



A LONG COTTAGE.

The internal arrangements of the old palace were perfection as far as cleanliness was concerned, a considerable number of books finding space on the old Queen's bookshelves. At the one inn, "The Borderers' Arms," there was preserved an ancient and very quaintly-carved chair, in which the queens of several generations had from time to time sat; it could hardly be dignified by the name of a throne, however, on this account.

Queen Helen, with whom I afterwards took a walk of some little distance, turned out to be a most entertaining

old lady still hoping to come into untold wealth, left some time since by a gipsy of her name in America, who, having "struck oil" and died, has left his pile awaiting the claims of next-of-kin.

By the way, Queen Helen is the second Sovereign with whom I have had the honour of taking a stroll; the other having been Queen Elizabeth. Start not, reader; on investigation it will be found to be as true—as that Queen Helen was sister-in-law to King David. I refer to Queen (then Princess) Elizabeth of Roumania, who, during the Russo-Turkish war, took me with the kindest courtesy from ward to ward in her hospital at Bucharest, of which with becoming modesty she was, nevertheless, most justly proud.

Nor have I confined my investigations to the lives alone of the Romany. Dustmen, and their doings; their huge dust-heaps, and the equally huge fortunes in some cases made out of them, also having claimed my attention. Then, again, a cruise in a canal-boat has now and again revealed to me curious passages in the lives of our floating population. Lives, in their way, quite as distinctive as those of the gipsies.

Life on a monkey-boat—a name given to the smaller kind of barge which is generally used for the conveyance of bricks—may have for the first week or two the charm of novelty; but it is a sadly monotonous one in the long run.

During my peregrinations amongst the bargees and masters of monkey-boats, I made the acquaintance at one of the locks of a most interesting old fellow, of whom I made a sketch which I now publish. Being infinitely

better posted up than most of his fellows, his information was invaluable ; besides which, he introduced me to many of his friends, and thus it was that I obtained a sort of *entrée* into canal society. One of their great difficulties seems to be the education of their children, since, having no fixed abode, they are quite beyond the reach of Board and Parochial schools.

They pride themselves very much on the cabins they



inhabit, which are, as a rule, furnished in their peculiar kitchen-like way with some taste ; while pictures cut out of the illustrated papers cover every available space. Indeed, no one who has not at some time of his life found himself in the cabin of a monkey-boat, would believe what a vast amount of comfort may be condensed into a small space.

Then, again, there are "fly-boats," conveyed from place to place by horses, which are changed at short stages, and by means of which they are towed along at a considerable rate. Strangely enough, these same "fly-boats" derive their name from those used by the Saxon pirates of the sixth and seventh centuries, who much affected our eastern shores, and were renowned for their rapid movements. Ever on the alert to swoop down on their victims, or, if worsted, to make tracks, we are told by Sidonius that these marauders were amongst the most terrible of enemies with whom it was possible to engage.

What changes the intervening centuries have brought about! Pirates are few and far between on the high seas, and the "fly-boat" of to-day takes its peaceable inland course on commerce bent. The conclusion I came to with reference to these traders on our waterways was that they were an infinitely better set than people of parallel position to be found in the highways and byways of our great cities; and that while a strong religious sentiment prevailed, they were, curiously enough, as a class, inclined to be very superstitious, believing in signs and omens to no small degree. Nor is this so much to be wondered at, considering the long hours they spend at night gliding silently from lock to lock.

To attempt to describe the many curious communities amongst whom I have been thrown whilst in quest of material for my pencil, I should take you up creeks, byways, and back streets, round about the docks, to thieves' kitchens, and other unclean corners in this great capital, and to all sorts of out-of-the-way places on the Continent,

where the ordinary traveller would never think of penetrating. Were I to dilate on such experiences, I should extend this volume far beyond its intended limits, without advancing my object, which is that of conveying to my readers a rough idea of my doings in peace times generally, and not of going into lengthy dissertations on the many phases of a somewhat eventful life.



CHAPTER XIII.

PRINCE ALBERT.—TIMELY INCENTIVES.—COUNTESS COWPER.—
 A LITTLE ANIMAL PAINTER.—SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.—DR.
 CHRISTOPHER IRVING'S ADVICE.—ART AND ENTERPRISE.—
 A REPRESENTATIVE BOHEMIAN.—HELPING LAME DOGS OVER
 STILES.—SWEET SEVENTEEN AT THE AQUARIUM.—SMITTEN.
 —LOVE'S ARROWS.—HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT.—IN-
 EXPLICABLE IMPRESSIONS.—THE NIGHT BEFORE THE R.A.
 —WOODEN PAVEMENTS.—EXPERIENCES AS A LECTURER.—
 DRURY LANE.—ADDRESSING A LAMP-POST.—CHARLES
 DUVAL.—THE GROSSMITHS, PÈRE ET FILS.—CURIOUS PRO-
 CLIVITIES. — TOMBSTONES. — PROFESSIONAL NURSES. —
 REVELATIONS.—MY FIRST ACADEMY PATRON.—GEORGE
 AUGUSTUS SALA.—PLEVNA IN PICCADILLY.—GROANS OF
 THE WOUNDED.—A CURIOUS CHRISTMAS EVE.—LOVE AND
 WAR. — “ TO THE BANQUET WE ‘PRESS.’ ” — EDWARD
 DRAPER.—A SUPERCILIOUS CRITIC.—SOCIETY'S SHAMS.—
 “ AU REVOIR.”

THERE appears to me to be a tendency on the part of some writers to pose upon the merits of their ancestors, and borrow reflected light from their better known contemporaries. Personally, however, I feel that while one should stand on one's own merits, at the same time there are those who through life have exercised such a marked influence on one's career, that it would be ungenerous indeed not to acknowledge in a volume of this kind the indebtedness one feels.

Let me illustrate by a few examples the idea I would convey. When about thirteen I was a student—if so

insignificant a little creature could be called one—at Marlborough House, where the Vernon collection, since taken to the National Gallery, was then being exhibited. My unaccustomed hand produced some very odd results, amongst others, copies of “Highland Music,” and “The Cavalier’s Pets,” by Sir Edwin Landseer. From the first ambitious failure I obtained the nickname of “Music,” by which I am even still known to some who were at that time fellow students.

Concerning my second attempt, “The Cavalier’s Pets,” I was unmercifully attacked till one day two gentlemen, evidently privileged, as it was a students’ day, came through the galleries. I felt myself blushing to the roots of my hair as they stopped near my easel. Each however gave me some kindly and valuable advice, and, in a few words, much encouragement. I breathed again.

Oh! how grateful did I feel that *anyone*, especially grown-up people, could see anything but material for derision in my tiny efforts. Imagine my astonishment when I presently heard that one of those two gentlemen who gave me this timely incentive was His Royal Highness Prince Albert. In connection with which incident I may mention that on several occasions in later life Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to criticize my work at Buckingham Palace, which, I take it, might never have been in evidence had it not been for the Prince’s kindly criticism of “The Cavalier’s Pets”—it was a turning point—for that production must have been indeed a long, very long way after Landseer.

Again, about a year later, the Dowager Countess Cowper, seeing me sketching in Panshanger Park, Hert-

fordshire, and fancying, in the kindness of her heart, that she saw some merit in my work (a most generous freak of fancy indeed), gave me by way of encouragement (and what encouragement that was too) a commission (my first *real* commission) to paint one of her favourite dogs ; with a view to which, as I was spending my holidays with an uncle who lived in the neighbourhood, I spent the mornings of several days at her house ; and it was on one of these occasions, jogging along, portable easel in hand, that I was confronted by an urbane looking, elderly gentleman, who was riding through the park—

“ Well, my little man, and what have you been up to ? Fishing, eh ? ” he continued, glancing casually at my paraphernalia.

“ No,” I replied ; “ I ’ve been painting.”

“ What ? Painting ! And pray what have you been painting ? ”

“ One of Lady Cowper’s dogs, Sir.”

“ One of Lady Cowper’s dogs. Ugh ! Another animal painter in the field, eh ! This is serious ; I must go up at once and see her Ladyship on the subject.” With this he galloped off.

Terribly alarmed at the turn things had taken, I scampered off to make inquiries at the lodge as to who my interrogator had been, since from the direction in which he had come I could see he must have just passed through. Nor was I much reassured when I heard it was no less a personage than Sir Edwin Landseer.

Her Ladyship the next day told me he had seen, and expressed a very decided opinion on my work, which she would not tell me personally, but communicate by letter.

This, in my small mind, added additional terrors to the situation, till the next morning I received by post, a most complimentary criticism on my schoolboy effort, expressed, as far as possible, in that great painter's words. There had been no real cause for alarm on my part from the first. Disguised as troubles, blessings often come.

Thus to H.R.H. Prince Albert and Sir Edwin Landseer do I owe my earliest encouragement.

To a favourite maxim of my grandfather, Dr. Christopher Irving—"Readiness with an alternative often leads to success"—am I indebted for the cultivation of a quality which has over and over again been of signal service to me as a war artist, in which capacity unexpected circumstances have so frequently to be contended with.

Nor must I forget my indebtedness to Mr. Thomas Cook, whose name as "The Excursionist" is a household word.

I am afraid to say how many years ago it was that, bent on rubbing shoulders with the world I was passing his office—then, I think, on the south side of Fleet Street—when it suddenly struck me (not an original idea by any means) how delightful it would be to go to Paris—if I could only afford it. The advertisements concerning continental tours in his window had doubtless suggested it. Pondering thus, I went some distance in the direction of Charing Cross, when, without being actually uttered, the words "Art and enterprise, Art and enterprise," so tickled my tympanum that I was constrained to return to that office.

Was Mr. Cook in?

He was. Was my business of a private nature?

"Yes; certainly."

"Oh, then I'll go up and see," said the clerk in the lower office.

He presently re-appeared and directed me to a room on the first floor, where Mr. Thomas Cook was seated.

"I have an idea with reference to art and enterprise," I began.

"Art and enterprise!"

He evidently thought I was either a harmless lunatic, or supposed I was interviewing another Mr. Cook.

"Art and enterprise! Isn't there some mistake?"

No, there was no mistake; though I had some difficulty in putting that idea into practical form. It was this—that if Mr. Cook was half as anxious to be possessed of pictures of foreign places as I was to see them, a combination of art and enterprise might be effected by which we should mutually benefit.

I then gave a case in point. "I want to go to Paris, but can't afford it. You, on the other hand, would like a picture of, say, Notre Dame by moonlight, if you saw one. You give me a return ticket to Paris—Notre Dame by moonlight will be added to your collection on my return. Thus, the ends of both will be compassed."

"And, pray, when did this enter your head?"

"Five minutes ago."

"And you put it in practice at once."

"Yes; why not? I'd nothing to lose."

"On the contrary, everything to gain," said he.

"Just so."

At this point Mr. Cook said something down a speaking-tube, and a few moments afterwards a clerk entered and gave him a blue envelope, which he handed to me.

“What’s this?” I said, inquiringly.

“A first-class return ticket to Paris.”

I was wonderstruck.

“But you don’t know me, Mr. Cook. My name even is——”

“Exactly so. I’m quite willing to lose a return ticket to Paris, if I am wrong in my conjecture that you are right. I believe you to have had a bright idea and put it at once, as you say, into practice; to justify my good opinion remains with you. Good morning.”

I was young at the time, and went away fully determined to produce the most marvellous moonlight that had yet been painted; and, perhaps, from certain points of view it was unique. Suffice it to say, for years and years I travelled over all parts of Europe by a mutual arrangement of this kind with Mr. Cook; and it was most undoubtedly the experience thus obtained which gave me a zest and fitted me for the profession of my choice. Therefore, as another to whom I owe much, do I record the name of my friend Mr. Thomas Cook, through whom I first made the acquaintance of the Continent.

The second title of this book, “Studio,” would not be justified were the name of Mr. W. F. Mills—better known throughout the length and breadth of Bohemia as Fred Mills, not introduced—he who, without being practically an artist himself, has been the motive-power, many a time and oft, in the shape of early encouragement, &c., by means of which many men have become what they now are. Actuated by a pure love for art and artists, he is ever to be found in their midst, and alway to the fore in their interests. Not to know Mills would argue oneself unknown; not to

have looked on him as one of the pervading spirits of art would have been to have vegetated—not lived—in Bohemia.

There is something spasmodically impulsive about Mills, which makes whatever he may do all the more genuine. For instance, the night I started for Plevna, many old friends came to see me off from Charing Cross. Mills, however, was conspicuous by his absence, till just as the train was about to leave, in he rushed in breathless haste; he had been buying a stick for me, a formidable bit of true British oak, as he put it, which would serve to remind me of the old country, and at the same time keep off the dogs. The guard's whistle having sounded, I was gone, and Mills—satisfied.

There is a story told of him which graphically illustrates his spontaneous good nature, and which, I have ascertained, is perfectly true.

He had been to some fashionable West End gathering, and it happened he was strolling home down Piccadilly, enjoying the cool, mid-summer midnight air, after the hot, crowded room he had just left, when his attention was drawn to a group of poor stricken creatures more remarkable for their paint than their perfection, who were wistfully looking at the piles of bread and butter and slices of plum cake which met their eyes on a neighbouring coffee-stall.

“You see,” he said to me, when I asked him about it, “there was really only *one* thing one could do, so of course I did it.”

In society's *salons*, with her daintiest tea-cups and choicest Bohea, the charming farce of light refreshment

had just been played—in many a similar West End mansion to the one he had himself left; and here was yet another (and, from some points of view, similar) entertainment. But comparisons are odious, as the copy-book says; yet should he extend less courtesy now, to these waifs and strays than to those at whose shrine he had so recently worshipped? They were equally women.

It was at Hyde Park Corner. He was across the road in no time, insisting on those frail but fair ones seating them-



A MIDNIGHT MEETING.

selves on the semicircular stone coping, and was himself soon busily engaged supplying their wants, a plate of bread and butter in one hand and cake in the other, while tea and coffee was handed round *ad lib.*; thus did those poor outcasts, for an interval of ten minutes only in their miserable lives, enjoy the same courtesies of which “society” by very repetition tires.

“How much did my little entertainment cost me? Well, no matter; it was very cheap, taken at the current

price of—pleasant memories; to which the incredulity of the policeman on the beat was thrown in.”

Such an one is Mills; an artistic pioneer, who helping to clear artistic jungles for the advancing army, would himself sink—if he could—into oblivion, but he cannot, for *such* men must leave their footprints on the sand of time.

Indirect influences like those to which I have just referred have so aided me through life that I speak of them very advisedly now, and think, too, that while on the subject, it may not be uninteresting to the general reader to hear how the publication of this book came about.

It must have been fourteen years since, when two ladies went one afternoon to the Westminster Aquarium to see a collection of the rough sketches done by the War Artists of the *Illustrated London News* in a recent campaign.

I myself went amongst other visitors to that exhibition, and was not a little amused at the criticisms of the public on some of the contributions.

I had not been there long when my attention was attracted by a graceful girl of about seventeen, who was closely examining each with great interest, and who, as I approached, exclaimed to her companion—

“Oh! do look at this sketch—it’s covered all over with dots too; and here, on the margin, is an explanation, which dates from Erzeroum—

Note.—Don’t mistake the dots for bursting shells; they are caused by a plague of flies now raging.”

Without being noticeably interested, I was strangely attracted by the speaker, her face being of the fair Italian type so picturesque and uncommon, apart from which her costume was most artistic.

Thus favourably impressed, I left the gallery.

About a year and a half afterwards I was giving an old pupil of mine some hints in painting at her house in Croydon, when she introduced me to a friend of hers, a Miss Borrell, who was also fond of art. Her face at once struck me as being familiar. Had I been a believer in the transmigration of souls, I might have supposed we had met in some other sphere. Since, however, her name

was utterly unknown to me, it was evident I must have been mistaken.

Some time afterwards, at a conversazione, we again met. In course of conversation she became very much interested on hearing I was a War Artist, since she had, she said, some time back been to an exhibition at the Aquarium of sketches taken by artists at the front; and went on further



A FAMILIAR FACE.

to tell me that one of these, which was covered with dots, had particularly struck her, as the artist had written on the margin the note—

“Don’t mistake dots for bursting shells; they are caused by a plague of flies which is just now raging.”

This sudden revelation was electrical. I said nothing, but, like Sterne's raven, thought the more.

What did I think? Well, that may better be explained by my saying that a few months later Miss Borrell had consigned her heart to my keeping, and in due course became Mrs. Montagu; which brings me to the original reason for this digression, namely, to explain how the publication of my experiences—first, as *Wanderings of a War Artist*, and now in their later form—came about. My wife was one evening filling up some of her spare moments by making spills for my sanctum, doubling up for that purpose some advertisements torn from an old Academy catalogue, when her eye chanced to fall on the title of some warlike book published by Messrs. Allen & Co. Turning to me she said, impulsively, "I can see between the lines as plainly as possible—*Round About the Redoubt*, by Irving Montagu, published by Messrs. Allen & Co., &c.—though, of course, only in my mind's eye," she went on, as she continued her spill making; but the idea seemed to haunt her, so I humoured her presentiment, and placed myself in communication with Messrs. Allen & Co. The title of the first book being ultimately changed from *Round About the Redoubt* to that of *Wanderings of a War Artist*.

I have a strange confidence in impressions. I remember once labouring three months on a picture for the Royal Academy, and how it happened that the evening before "sending-in day" I had occasion to go to my artists' colourman—Newman, of Soho Square—for some small purchase, when I noticed a canvas distinct from others, the blank surface of which had an irresistible attraction for me, since I could distinctly see on it—"in my mind's

eye" again—a fish auction at Dieppe, the busy scene presenting itself in all its smallest details. I took that particular canvas home, rushed into my studio, and by gas-light "laid in" the whole subject. At day-light I recommenced, continuing to work on till gas-light was again necessary, even till 11.15 (the last moment for "taking in" would be 12 midnight), when, jumping into a cab, I drove off to the Royal Academy, where I arrived with my two pictures a few minutes before the witching hour.

The result of three months' hard work was rejected, while that sudden inspiration was accepted, hung on the line, sold the first week, and splendidly reviewed to boot. So much for presentiments.

As far as the production of these experiences of mine in book form goes, I should indeed be unworthy did I not record the invaluable aid my wife has rendered me throughout. To her sound judgment and admirable comments do I owe infinitely more than I can possibly express. She it has been who, with loving interest, has read *Wanderings of a War Artist*, and, latterly, *Camp and Studio*, page by page. Yet, stay! there is just one page which has escaped her criticism. It is the one you are at this moment perusing, for she is far too modest to accept what is, after all, only a just tribute to her most sympathetic assistance. I think it wise at this point to take you, reader, into my entire confidence, so that when she sees this reference to herself for the first time in book form, you may help me to bear the burden of the only secret I ever had from the most devoted helpmate it is possible for anyone to possess.

I referred just now to a certain very marked Italian

expression which struck me as noticeable when first we met on that eventful day at the Aquarium. This was easily accounted for later on, when I discovered her to be the grand-daughter of General Maceroni, an Italian officer who having, in the Peninsular War and afterwards as one of Murat's aide-de-camps, seen lots of fighting, came to England and made several fortunes (which he as promptly lost) by many marvellous inventions, amongst which were steam coaches for our highways and wooden pavements, an adaptation of which latter invention is now in use; indeed, it is recorded in a quaint couplet of the comic press of the time—

When London roads are paved with wood, long live Maceroni,
We'll go in for something good saved out of our coal money,

strongly suggestive of using up the London street paving for fuel.

His widow, a delightfully entertaining old lady of ninety-one is now living, whose memories of the sunshine and shadows of a life spent with her husband in those stirring times, are yet so vivid that she is able to entertain her friends for hours together.

* * * *

I have been much amused, when on lecturing tours, at the anxiety on the part of the residents in remote districts to get a "glimpse" of the lecturer. At the hotel, at the railway station, or elsewhere—"off the stage" as they put it—I have been "walked round" by the inquisitive, just as an East End tailor walks round his dummy, seeing if the tourist suit—this style 32s. 6d.—fits like a glove from every point; or as the Cockney sightseer at Barnum's recently "walked round" the tattooed lady.

I remember how a rustic once emphatically expressed his disappointment at my appearance.

“Why, ’e looks loike any other folk. I ’d er thought, after them there ’orrors ’e’s seen, e’d er looked savager an’ firier loike.”

A first night’s experience of a rehearsal at Drury Lane seems to follow the above naturally. It is a story which really should be heard from the lips of the *littérateur*, Redding Ware, who was there as a critic on the occasion. I think the play was *Youth*, by my old friend Pettitt—I at least know it was one of his many successful dramas, and that the incident I refer to took place during the rehearsal of a battle scene, the services of a veteran sergeant of the Guards, with a number of rank and file, being hired for the occasion to represent the British army, while the Afghan hordes they had to disperse were represented by supers.

The army, when the curtain rises, are in an entrenched position. A rebel chieftain, springing on to some convenient rocks, stands out black against the sky-line, and is in the act of reconnoitring the positions of the British, when, with shouts, yells, blank cartridges, and fixed bayonets, the Britishers are supposed to carry all before them.

It was at this critical moment, when the command to advance should have been given, that that veteran sergeant altogether broke down. He had a tear in his eye as he said to his men—

“’Ere, steady there, you fellows. As you wus—no one’s to move a hinch. ’Ere, stage manager. Mr. ’Arris! Someone—quick! This ’ere won’t never do.” Then, his

feelings welling up within him, he approached that immovable super—the chieftain—who was awaiting his cue on that rocky eminence. For one moment he gazed on him with mingled scorn and pity, and then, addressing him in measured terms, said :

“What—you ! You call yourself a Hafghan chief ? You, you miserable modification of a hanimated door-mat. Look 'ere, I tell you straight, if the others ain't no more like Hafghans than you, we won't fight, blowed if we do.” With this that indignant commander of the British army turned on his heel, refusing to allow his troops to advance till the enemy looked more worthy of their steel.

Many similar tales no doubt might be told of the genuine article clashing with the painted imitation, which brings me to certain misadventures of my own in connection with theatricals, though I cannot claim any closer professional link with the stage than that of having at one time been a scene painter.

The occasion of which I am reminded was one of the many on which, as an amateur, I strutted the histrionic boards for local charities. I was living at Walham Green at that time, and as London had only just begun to make the acquaintance of its suburban cousin through the medium of the jerry builder, there were yet long roads and terraces only half finished and unlet which I had to traverse before getting home. It was the night before a performance of *Boots at the Swan*, in which I was to play the part of Captain Friskley ; and as a large and critical audience was expected, I was most anxious to be letter perfect ; a little disappointed, too, at not having got through the last rehearsal as well as

I could have wished, in the opening scene of which I was supposed to look up an old friend (Higgins) who was staying at an hotel.

Under these circumstances, as it was nearly midnight, and there was not a soul within sight or hearing, why should I not suppose the first gas lamp I came to to be Higgins—rush up to it—and go through that particular part once again (slapping the base of that lamp-post as if it had been Higgins's spinal vertebræ), and address it as follows :

Hallo, Higgins, how are you? Just arrived from Bath. Not at home. Told to come here, and here I am. You're looking devilish well. How's your uncle? Sisters quite well? Brother Tom alive, and merry? Got any more pointers? Bay mare on her legs again? How's Sally Jenkins? Do much on the Leger? What are you up to here? Poaching, eh? Sly dog. Take dare—deep ones at the bar. Snug room this. Why, you've grown moustaches! What time do you dine?

Now, since the great point of this opening speech was that it be said in a rapid, jerky manner, and, if possible, in one breath, I leave you to suppose the energy necessary to such a sustained harangue. I will also leave you to suppose my blank astonishment when *I*—on its conclusion—received a blow on my own spinal vertebræ and, a bull's-eye being flashed in my face, I found myself *vis-à-vis* with a mild-eyed, pitying policeman; while from the one house in the road which was let, and facing which I stood, came peals of laughter. The people had only just moved in, and were giving a house-warming.

"Ain't you well, Sir?" said that mild-eyed member of the force. "Nothing wrong with the hupper story, I 'ope; 'cos, yer know—this 'ere ain't 'Iggins as you's a-ravin' about."

Explanations were as long as they were unsatisfactory.

The mild-eyed one saw me to the end of his beat, and the people at the house-warming flocked to the front door, throwing out several suggestions as I passed as to the possibility of my being the ghost of Kemble in a comic mood. It is hardly necessary to add that when I next went home that way I made a slight *détour*, so as to avoid that particular road and lamp-post.

On another occasion, at the Eyre Arms Assembly Rooms, St. John's Wood, I was asked, suddenly, to perform first rôle in a comic comedietta—I forget its name—owing to the fact that he who was to take the part had been attacked by illness, and having, in a couple of hours or so, got a smattering of the plot, had to leave the rest to gag and the prompter.

I was a moral mediæval peasant in tights, who loved, not wisely but too well, a beautiful princess. I came to grief to begin with.

I rushed on, shouting, "Dearest, I love you!" to the wrong lady; who, having only one speech, and not knowing exactly where it fitted, thought she would get it over as soon as possible, by replying, "Unhand me, monster! You shall hear more of this anon," which, considering she knew she had nothing more to say, was untrue on the face of it, so I cannoned off her into the arms of a lady of a certain age who had made up young, and said—

"Tell me; oh! tell me, where is the Lady Violet. Haply thou art her mother, noble dame?"

But then she was not. It was Lady Violet herself, a fact which I did not discover till after the performances were over, for the story had by this time become so hopelessly mixed that it was impossible to hark back to the original

plot. Thus we all made the best of it. We were acting for the benefit of the Blind School in St. John's Wood, so our shortcomings sat lightly on our shoulders, having already secured the entrance fees, although I was told by several afterwards that though that comedietta was just a *little* complex in parts, and wanting in continuity—still it was marvellously funny, and strikingly original; and in this latter opinion, at least, I have coincided ever since.

Were not the list a long one, I might say much of mummers I have met—great men who have been really great, great men who have been little, and little men, Napoleons of the stage, who have been great indeed. Surely this may be said of, amongst others, those socially charming and professionally talented entertainers, the Grossmiths, father and sons—for the father, brimful of wit and kindness, yet lives in the memories of all who knew him, so vividly that it is hard to realise his sad and sudden end.

I remember how Weedon Grossmith, as talented as an artist as he is as an actor, when a small boy, used to give, on the occasion of a family gathering, a little entertainment with his brother George, in which two street boys who are playing buttons quarrel, and do everything but fight, even to picking up stones. It was like a charcoal sketch in half a dozen touches, perfect in its way, and the earliest spring evidence of the fruit which that family tree has borne.

Then there was poor Charles Duval, who, returning from a successful tour in India some time since, in an unaccountable fit of mania, left his berth in the middle of the night and leapt overboard. One who, like Yorick, had “set the

table in a roar ;” had entertained, as he alone could, the thousands who in course of time had gone to hear him in Piccadilly and elsewhere ; who, at one time, was an officer of some distinction in the American army, sometime “showman,” and again, in turn, editor and war correspondent ; and who, at last, when in the very prime of life, made that fatal plunge in a moment of frenzy which was induced probably by the state of great nervous tension in which he lived. Ever to the fore in all that was kindly and generous, Charles Duval will long be missed by many.

* * * *

I never cared for tombstones as an amusement, did you ? I know there are many who seem to see much innocent enjoyment, when spending a day or two from home, in “exploring,” as they commonly call it, churchyards ; finding out odd epitaphs and walking round family vaults. I do not mind epitaphs, up to a certain point ; I have no doubt there is a certain fascination about family vaults, and that you miss them when you are used to them, but surely—“There’s time enough for that by-an-bye.” So far, recreations of this kind have never held *me* spell-bound.

Of course we have all met people who have been to “So-and-so ; pretty place, So-and-so ; so quaint and picturesque, you know. Oh, yes ; and such an awfully jolly old churchyard, with such dear old tombs, you know ; those with the skulls and cross-bones, and cherubs’ heads on ’em, you know. Oh, we did have such a delightful day !”

Well, in my opinion, people of this sort, if they would have their cup of joy full to the brim, should intermarry with monumental masons and undertakers, with just a flavouring of hospital nurse thrown in here and there.

How curiously it might read after the marriage ceremony—

“The guests return to the vaults, where the groaning board was spread with funeral baked meats, and at about three o’clock the happy couple started for the churchyard, their destination probably being—as the sexton wittily put it—Gravesend.”

Were you, by the way, ever under the influence of a paid nurse?

I distinctly remember having suffered in that way myself once. I had scarlet fever and hospital nurse both at the same time. I got over the first complaint in three months, but I never got over the latter.

To begin with. Your wife is supposed to be released of all further concern in your welfare or existence. Of course she may think of you in a sad sort of way, as if you had been dead for years, but she can only call and leave her card at your bedroom door if she wants to know how you are getting on. You belong, as it were, to that nurse, “for better or for worse;” literally, for either, as a matter of fact. If the former, you make her a present, and for many reasons bless the day she left you; if the latter, well, someone else makes her a present—black gloves, deep bordered handkerchiefs, &c., as outward and visible signs of an expression of grief which she could only have been expected to feel had you recovered, in which case they would not have been forthcoming.

On the occasion I refer to just now (when I had the scarlet fever) I was waited on by the genuine article, one who goes by the appellation of “trained” nurse; not a “party” who went out nursing, but a real, unmis-

takable, gaunt, sombrely-clad, black-bonneted nurse. Oh, no ; there is no mistaking her. She wears just that "faint" suggestion of a widow's cap, which seems to say, "All flesh is grass, but these are only weeds ;" and who—when for the first time she is ushered into your room—stalks up to you and says, in a condescending tone, "Well, and how do you find yourself by this time?" addressing you as a child would a doll with a supposed attack of influenza, or an ordinary person might be supposed to address a very small child or an imbecile.

Yes ; and she did not stop there, either. She was a "trained" nurse in every sense of the word ; she had her profession quite at the tips of her fingers. Apart from those tips, she confidentially told my wife, she was generally able to arrange with the undertaker ; which were her own little perquisites, and nothing whatever to do with the institution from which she came.

On Monday, she had certain references to make, touching the dear departed generally ; these she made to friends and relations, to get them into a condition as it were for a good long week of it.

On Tuesday, she would throw in a few special recent cases, adding to these according to the seriousness of the condition of her patient.

On Wednesday, the spare half-hours would be devoted to grave references, in your presence, to the beating of your pulse, and the high state of your temperature when last taken.

At this stage the blinds are invariably pulled down—to keep out the sun, as she puts it, but really to impress upon the patient the seriousness of his case ; in fact, the

darkening of the room gives the exact tone and impression she wishes to convey to her surroundings.

On Thursday, she just remembers an exactly similar case to your own ; a Mr. Joseph Simpkins, in which all the symptoms were identical. She begins this story in the morning, whilst she is sponging your hands and face, to "bring you round a bit." Towards the gloaming, just as you are dozing off for half an hour, she wakes you up by suddenly saying, "They had such lovely feathers at Mr. Simpkins' funeral, and his widow's mourning was trimmed with the most expensive crape ; it looked something beautiful."

Alas ! You had, up till that moment, hoped against hope that poor Simpkins, whose symptoms were so similar to yours, had recovered.

By Friday the house has nearly been reduced to subjection ; one servant having given notice because she has heard curious noises, and the other because she is sure there is something wrong with the drains.

On Friday night, that nurse makes her last and final effort to reduce the garrison and capture the fort.

She tells you—they are her last trump cards—three ghoulish stories, each more awful than the last ; the third, that of someone (very like yourself in face) who got up after he was supposed to be dead, having been in a trance, and came to her room and asked her "Where the deuce she'd put the whiskey."

Somehow or other you revive a bit after this, or rather begin to hope you may do so ; they are not all like poor Simpkins, after all—for here, "back from the jaws of death," comes No. 3, anxiously inquiring after the where-

abouts of the whiskey. There is something quite refreshing about it.

By Saturday things have taken a decided turn. You rebel. You must have passed the crisis now, for you declare that if she does not leave you must; and as under the latter conditions you could only go in that direction whence no traveller returns, it dawns on someone that you have had enough nursing for the present, and you live.

Commend me to true sentiment, but defend me from sentimentality and horror-hunting. Of all things should God's acre be open to the pilgrim of love, and why the traveller in passing through should not temper his pleasures with chastening influences, I know not. I would even go as far as epitaphs, which, quaint or clever, have an interest peculiarly their own. There is a picturesqueness and poetry, too, about such localities, which commend themselves to poet and artist alike. But quite without the pale of all this is that morbid sentimentality which I never could understand, any more than I have yet been able to enjoy—with real zest—the recital of some professional nurse's experiences, embellished as they have been with forebodings for the future.

However, I take it we are all more or less under the influence of the uncanny, indeed, I have at the present moment very vivid memories of how the joyous occasion on which I received the intimation from the Royal Academy that my first picture exhibited there was sold, was tempered by the discovery that an undertaker was the purchaser; and when I called on him, as I did at the close of the Academy, the escutcheons on his house (a semi-private one in a certain square) came as a pain-

ful reminder that all things, even the cheque I hoped would be handed over to me, were perishable. I found my patron, however, a very merry soul, possessed of the peculiar advantage of most mobile features, so that on occasion it was evident he could express personal sympathy with family suffering to a very pronounced extent.

Seeing he had a really good collection of oil and water-colour paintings in the double dining-rooms into which I had been ushered, I congratulated him.

“Not at all—not at all, my dear Sir; pray, don’t. I’m no judge of pictures, I only like ’em; I don’t mind telling you this as an artist. Fact is, good pictures are a good investment—nothing better; besides which, it’s flattering outside one’s—ahem!—profession, to feel one has the reputation of being a judge, and I’m quite sure that no one who is, will accuse me of bad taste as far as choice is concerned; but it has nothing whatever to do with me, I assure you. Take down yours, and look at the back.” I did so. “See,” he went on; “George Augustus Sala is my authority. I take up the *Daily Telegraph*, put down all the pictures he quotes, and go off to the Royal Academy. Some, of course, are quite beyond me in price; these I mark off at once. As to the rest, I take whichever I like best, knowing that all must have artistic merit, or he wouldn’t say so. Very safe way of acquiring a collection and reputation, isn’t it?”

To me it has always been a matter of some interest, when at the Academy or elsewhere, where I have had pictures hung, to career around and get the unbiassed opinion of others on my work. One is naturally inclined to set aside those who dismiss one’s pictures with “Crude,”

"Tame," "Nothing in it that I can see," &c. &c., as eligible for Hanwell; while, on the other hand, those who incline to it as "A charming little bit," "So full of feeling," or "Just the very picture they would like to have if they could afford it," become people far beyond the common herd in artistic acumen.

I think, though, to enjoy this to the full, one should have had a show-picture on view alone at a "special" gallery; then it is that, mixing with the overawed throng, one feels proud indeed.

In my case, this happened with "At the Front, Plevna," which, just after that event, was one of several war pictures which were then being thus exhibited. It struck me—though I would not have admitted it for worlds at the time—that it was not so much the picture (though perhaps that had something to do with it) as the surroundings. The work I speak of was heralded by board-men, who, with bills of 4-inch letters, proclaimed that at St. James's Gallery, Piccadilly, my *magnum opus* was to be seen.

On arriving there, the spectator felt that he or she had left the world far, *far* behind, when going down the dark passage leading to the gloomy, heavily-draped room, in which that blood-stained battle-field was on view. Not so the picture itself though; that, with a top-light thrown down upon it, being so arranged as to startle spectators directly they enter.

Someone else was, to use an Americanism, "running" my picture; but I nevertheless made many mental notes at the time of the methods adopted.

There is a good deal, I take it, in the choice of the

young woman who takes the money at the door. A cheery, ruddy-cheeked syren would altogether spoil matters. She must, for all the world, look as if she had peeped in herself just now, and had not got over it yet. She should certainly talk in rather a low tone, so that, by the time one gets to the commissionaire who takes the checks she gives, one may feel as if being ushered into a place where a lying in state is in solemn progress; indeed, the general public unconsciously aid and abet in this, to no small extent, a whispered "How wonderful!" and "Dear me, how very dreadful!" coming in here and there with marked effect.

Now the proprietor of the gallery to which I refer had a small office just behind the picture—the canvas of which was 16 feet by 10. He was a chronic invalid, suffering, poor fellow, I should say, from most of those complaints which quack medicines are said to cure, but for the temporary relief of which—having found no real panacea—he had to rely on injections of morphine, these being administered by the introduction of a needle charged with that fluid into the arm. For this service he had a specially retained servant, since intense pain was the result unless, at certain irregular times, he was thus punctured.

One morning I happened to go into this gallery with a natural desire to see how the exhibition went, and found, unlike the ordinary solemn afternoon throng, that there was a long array of velvet-covered chairs empty—all save two—which were occupied by two elderly ladies. It was evident to me on entering that they were already much reduced—I do not mean in circumstances, but mental



"IT CHILLS ONE TO THE MARROW."

condition—and that the grave faces of money and check-takers had had the desired effect. Behind them lay gloomy impending clouds of sombre, sepulchral-looking damask hangings; before them lay Plevna, with a heap of dead in the foreground, who had become rigid in a last effort to escape from the pile of slain under which they lay. Slowly, solemnly, in the distance the Red Cross ambulances were to be seen approaching; doctors were here and there searching for wounded, while all around a ghastly stillness reigned which was quite appalling.

Yes—although I say it who ought not—there was something about the whole thing very grim; perhaps it was the hangings that did it, or, maybe, those ghostly attendants, or perhaps the idea that I should lose by the transaction (which I did) in the end: I do not know what it was, but I do know that I felt for those old ladies with all my heart—for suddenly, as I stood there, I became horrorstruck, and so did they. A long, wailing, moaning sound came across the Balkans, down into that hitherto silent valley of death, which, as they sat there shivering, varied its monotony now and again by a sharp cry of pain.

“Oh, how awful!” said the elder of the two ladies.

“It chills me to the very marrow,” said the other.

“It’s a prostitution of art, and oughtn’t to be allowed,” said the first.

“Oh, dear me! It’s given me a turn I shall be some time recovering from,” and so on.

I shall never forget the scared, indignant expression of those two elderly visitors, nor could I account for the startling, and to me quite novel effect that had been introduced, till I discovered that the proprietor, who had

sent his injector to Regent Street on some business on which he had been detained, was, in the meantime, suffering those paroxysms of pain in his little office which gave such realism to my picture.

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Some of those who have read *Wanderings of a War Artist* will remember an acquaintanceship which sprung up during the Carlist War between myself and a strangely devil-may-care, wandering Englishman named Maule, a man whose chief aim seemed to be to get shot, an object in which, by the way, he ultimately succeeded to his heart's content, as he was shot through that organ during the siege of St. Sebastian. Well, there is a curious sequel to that story, which you may believe or not, as you like, but which in every detail is true.

Remember, fact is allowed to be stranger than fiction, and war is the hot-bed of romance. In *Camp and Studio*, as in its father before it, *Wanderings of a War Artist*, I have striven rather to undercolour events than not, objecting very much to the necessity for that grain of salt with which some—especially the utterly inexperienced—are ever anxious to digest an event which it has not been their personal lot to experience.

And now to our subject, the sequel to poor Maule's death.

There are few families without a black sheep, some not being quite so black as they are painted. I had a cousin who may be said to have been, from this point of view, rather grey than black. A rolling stone from his youth up, he had many good points which I admired, and had had many trials of hard-upishness which I pitied. We met

very seldom, save on Christmas Eve—on this night, for many years, we foregathered. He would not come to my house or studio, as his get-up was not as faultless as he could have wished it to be; in fact, at times, the term mouldy might be said to apply. It was his sensitiveness on this point which obliged my meeting him in the busy haunts of men.

One Christmas Eve we met by appointment at the Underground Railway, Glo'ster Road Station, and strolled from there down several neighbouring roads, talking of old times and old friends as, on such a night, one is inclined to do. A travelled man himself, he was also keen to hear all about my recent experiences, which at that time had been in the Carlist campaign.

Thus continuing our walk we found ourselves presently outside a quiet South Kensington hotel, to which a sort of saloon bar was attached. We went in, that through the modest co-operation of Bacchus we might propitiate King Christmas. We were followed by a lady and her maid; yes, I repeat it, a lady and her maid. They looked strangely out of place, as you may suppose, and evidently felt so, too.

“Would you,” said the lady, turning to me and taking her card-case nervously from her pocket, “would you do me the great favour of calling at this address as soon as you conveniently can? I live there with my father; he knows all the circumstances of a case on which *you* alone can throw any light. You knew Mr. Waterhouse.”

I was more than mystified; I had never heard of Mr. Waterhouse. “She felt a little out of her element there; would I discuss the matter fully when I called? She was

quite sure I must know Mr. Waterhouse. She had overheard my conversation with my friend ; she, with her maid, had been walking in the same direction behind us for some distance. It was ordained by Fate that I should be the medium by which she obtained the information she so much pined for."

With this she abruptly left.

In the course of Christmas week I called at the address indicated on the card. I was courteously received by an elderly man, who retired on his daughter's appearance. She had a sad, well-chiselled, refined face, being full withal of a terrible unrest.

Nervously she produced a large album. "I should find there the portrait of Mr. Waterhouse." In vain did I protest I had no acquaintance of that name. I turned over page after page ; all portraits of people I had never heard of. Presently—yes, here was a portrait of a man I had known intimately in Spain. It was Maule, the would-be suicide ; he whose one object had been to die at the front. That poor lady was much overcome when I paused at this page.

"But his name was Maule."

"Ah," she said, "an assumed one ; his real name was Waterhouse. We were engaged to be married ; our engagement had lasted some years, when by unfortunate Stock Exchange speculations he lost everything. A great—and, it seemed to him, only—chance now presented itself, by means of which, with a capital of about £500, he could recover himself. I had recently had £400 left me. I lent it him ; he secured the remaining hundred, speculated, and—lost. The last die was cast ; his own money and

mine were both hopelessly gone ; he was a miserable man. Feeling that another interview with me would be more than he could bear, he left England, and wrote to me from Havre saying that he was making his way from there to the Spanish frontier ; he couldn't actually commit suicide in the ordinary sense of the word, so he would invite death."

Poor Maule—otherwise Waterhouse ! I knew the story, of course, well enough to the end ; how, by O'Donovan's side, he had been shot dead near St. Sebastian.

That day, however, I told her only the story of his desperate determination to die at the front.

She still hoped against hope, though she felt, on the other hand, in that paradoxical way in which women will sometimes put it, that he must be dead.

On leaving, I told her I would make further inquiries. I wrote to O'Donovan, who told me that when Maule's death was noised about at St. Sebastian as an Englishman killed at the front, it turned out that money to some amount was awaiting his claiming it at the General Post Office of that place.

What the amount was, or from whom it came, I never heard. Maule was dead, and there was an end to it ; and I communicated the sad news as delicately as possible to his poor heart-broken sweetheart, preferring to do this by letter. I received a touching reply ; and when passing, some three or four months later, that house where she had shown me the photograph, I noticed it was to let. I have never heard of her since.

It is a curious Christmas Eve story, which necessarily comes in here as a sequel to the previously-recorded inci-

dent, and it is all the more interesting because it is absolutely true.

I have a strong feeling that the objects of an autobiography are twofold—to convey as much about yourself as possible without appearing to do so, and to build your reputation on others as little as you can. I have noticed a tendency, to which I personally object, in many to quote, without sufficient reason, their fashionable or cultured surroundings.

I am a Conservative in that sense to the core; at the same time, it is not, I take it, to have enjoyed the advantages of polite society, which ensures refinement, or the friendship of the cultured to be clever. Otherwise, it would be easy to quote amongst one's acquaintances a long list of men and women with high-sounding titles and world-renowned reputations in science, music, art, and letters. We have no right to appropriate the laurels of our ancestors, or shine in the reflected light of our contemporaries.

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Undeserved as it was, my brethren of the pen and pencil on my return from Plevna paid me a most gracious and kindly compliment, which took the form of a dinner at the "Holborn," a curious little incident in connection with which is the only necessity for my mentioning that fact here.

"The Montagu Dinner," like all other similar ceremonies, was duly announced in the daily papers.

The night arrived—in fact, the clock was on the stroke of the hour at which that throng of kindly spirits were

to assemble. One thing, however, had been forgotten, and that was—to invite *me*.

To present myself as a candidate for admission would appear presuming on my part, while not to go would be equally wrong. There were two Dromios, why not another Montagu. What was I to do? It was rather an awkward predicament, you will admit. I decided to start, however, and was on the point of doing so when a telegram was handed me, which informed me I was “wanted.” At length, somewhat late, I presented myself at the corridor which led to the dining-room devoted to that purpose.

“Montagu dinner.”

“Yes, Sir. Ticket, Sir?”

“I have none.”

“There’s no getting in without a ticket, Sir.”

“I think when I tell you that I am Montagu, you will say there is.”

The waiter at this point becoming suspicious of my intentions, glanced anxiously at the hats and coats of the already assembled guests.

“Oh! I say; don’t tell me. You Montagu, eh? Good joke that. He’s being toasted—Montagu is, inside there, at this merry moment.”

But not even this assurance could make me forget my own identity, and that waiter and myself might presently have been busily engaged in mortal combat, had I not thought of the telegram, producing which the man (still half thinking I might bolt with a great coat during his absence) left me for a moment, while he communicated with those within. Thus it was I became the honoured

guest, and very much honoured I felt, too, at the "Montagu Dinner."

My old friend (I was almost saying everybody's old friend) Edward Draper, Solicitor to the Savage Club, occupied the chair on that occasion. With a brilliancy which seemed infectious, he told many pithy anecdotes of my early life; notably one of some of my first crude efforts at sign-painting, in the shape of pictorial advertising boards for one Walter Taylor, known to the public for his removals of household furniture in specially constructed cars "by road or rail."

"Montagu, in later life, has been sufficiently successful to have been 'on the line' at the Royal Academy, but I remember in those early days his pictures were 'all along the line' at almost every railway station in the United Kingdom. It is evident that Montagu's first having 'taken cars' for the Pimlico Depository was the stepping-stone to his recently having 'taken Kars' for the *Illustrated London News*."

Delightful as it is to look back to that warm welcome home from my friends of the Press, the return of the war correspondent is not always looked on as an unmixed blessing. It is not unnatural to suppose just after a great war that, if he be in town in the London season, he will be the recipient of many invitations.

I remember on one of these occasions I was chatting on ordinary, every-day subjects with a man who, while striking Apollo-like attitudes, and leaning with his elbow on the mantelpiece, made some reference to war, which led to his saying—

"Ah, yes—a—just so. By the way—a—there's some

fella coming here to-night—a—who's sposed to be a war artist to the *Gwaphic* or the *Illustwated London News*—a—.”

“Oh, you don't say so?” I innocently replied.

“Yes, I do—a—and confounded nuisances—a—they are, too—for if they can dance—a—they get all the best partners. And the joke of it is—a—you know—a—they never go anywhere near the war. Fact is, you see—a—it's done *this* way—a. A fella goes to the capital—a—Buchawest—a—or Constantinople, for instance; gets a lot of first impwessions, you know—a—and they are worked up in Fleet Street and the Stwand—a. That's the joke of it; ‘Stwait from Our Special at the fwont.’ Ha! ha! Capital idea, you know—a; but then—a——.”

At this moment our host came up and asked if we had been introduced.

“No—a.”

Then we *were* introduced, and if you could only have seen that man's face as he said “Oh! dea' me—a—I'd not the slightest—a—idea, I—a—assure you, that I—a—” and so on.

But the musicians drowned the rest, and we all took our partners for the next dance.

Once again, this time at a bachelor's rooms in Albemarle Street, I was one of a party of eight, each of whom had been described to the rest as a man “to know, don't you know,” who, in science, literature, medicine, law, or art, had, so to speak, “won his spurs, don't you know.”

It was quite late in the evening that a doctor who was seated near me ascertained in the course of conversation

my name, which he had not, as is often the case, at first caught. He at once shook hands, a little to my astonishment, most cordially, saying—

“ Really, this is a delightful surprise. I felt from our host’s florid description we were presently to see quite an apparition—folding-doors thrown wide open, war artist of the *Illustrated London News* discovered in top boots, revolvers, and all complete; explosion, red-fire, tableau—instead of which, here you have been, for ever so long, ordinary flesh and blood after all.”

We all know this kind of host (often a very good fellow in other respects too) who builds his reputation on his friends. “ I’ve asked a man to meet you to-night before whom Santley will tremble,” or a scientific man “ who, if all that’s said of him be true will run Edison hard,” or a coming R.A., or an actor, “ of whom Irving is reported to have said that, in his opinion—but hush ! here he comes. Let me introduce you, dear boy.”

Such men are not uncommon; but it is when the complaint breaks out with the opposite sex that it is most trying. You will find it raging at times at “ crushes,” “ at homes,” “ kettledrums,” and “ small and earlies,” especially where those draperies described in *Patience* as “ greenery-yallery ” hold their own, where peacocks’ feathers compete with Japanese fans for supremacy, where *self* becomes a demi-god and *everybody* is “ somebody.”

I do not think I shall ever forget once going to see some æsthetic people in Bayswater, whose very souls were wrapped up in harmony and the eternal fitness of things; they had carried this to such an extent that they travelled

[illegible]



SUN-FLOWER SOCIETY.

long weary miles to get blue and white draperies which matched as near as possible the colour of the china which crept round their looking-glasses, and perched itself on every available bracket in every available corner.

Then, that there should be no wrong chord struck, that no assertive tone should disturb their souls' repose, did this worthy family—a mother and two daughters—dress in exactly the same material as the graceful, many-folded abundant draperies by which they were surrounded. I repeat, I do not think I shall ever forget visiting that house at Bayswater, an idea of which may be best conveyed by the illustration. I thought, at a first glance, when ushered into the room, that I was alone; presently, however, three apparently trunkless heads and six detached arms began to move mysteriously about; and I discovered, on their rising, that I was being greeted by Madam and her two fair daughters.

But this sort of thing is, after all, nothing to a crush of Lily-Worshippers or society lionizers, be they æsthetic or philistine, when the colonel—who by accident finds himself there—is filled with blank amazement at being introduced to you as Colonel Etcetera, “of Seringapatam,” a feeling which you fully reciprocate when introduced to him as our very particular friend, Irving Montagu, “of Plevna.”

This has on several occasions happened to me, the result generally being that although we may have every possible feeling that our hostess means exceedingly well, she utterly fails in her aim of impressing each with the other's importance.

Personally, I have never felt so small as at such times. Poor Edmund O'Donovan of the *Daily News*, about the time he was writing *The Merv Oases*, suffered terribly from that prevailing epidemic, hastening often from room to room pursued by society syrens, whose mingled hero-worship expressed itself in the three words "O'Donovan of Merv."

Of the Postlethwaites and Maudles, the De Tompkinses, and others, whose peculiarities have been recorded by the facile pencil of Du Maurier, I need not say much, though I may make a passing reference to one utterly "too-too" young lady whom I took down to supper in the "sunflower days" some years ago; and who, while discoursing sweetly between the chicken and ham, jellies and tipsy cake, indulged in one long, low-toned rhythmical exultation about one of Rossetti's pictures—the point of which I am quite sure I (and I think I may say she too) failed to grapple; but then you see, she was young and beautiful, and I—well, I was, shall we say susceptible—so perhaps, as with that mysterious concoction, tipsy cake, there was a dash of intoxicating mystification about it to which we were neither of us averse.

Heigho! How time flies. She's a Mrs. Daniel Webster now, the wife of one of the kings of Cottonopolis, with four or five little Websters gambolling round about her.

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And now, reader, since we have lived together not only under canvas but, latterly, in Bohemia too, what shall I say to *you* now that, for the time being at least, we are about to separate? How can I better express my apprecia-


tion of your companionship than by saying *Au revoir*? I at least look forward with much pleasure to meeting you again; and, as far as I am concerned, shall always be glad in the veiled future to revert to those "pleasant old days of the past" I have spent with you in CAMP AND STUDIO.



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